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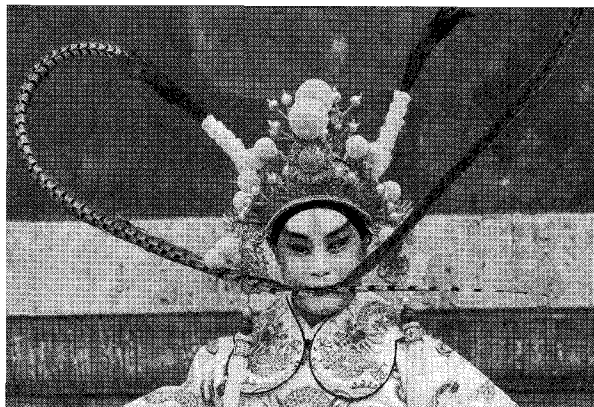
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COVER: Pamela Paparone

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THE NEW YORKER

25 WEST 43RD STREET, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10036

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THE NEW YORKER (ISSN 0028-792X), published weekly by The New Yorker Magazine, Inc., 25 W. 43rd St., N.Y., N.Y. 10036; Steven T. Florio, president and chief executive officer; Rebecca Wesson Darwin, vice-president and publisher; Sam R. Spoto, vice-president; Stuart H. Jason, vice-president and treasurer; Ruth A. Diem, vice-president and human resources director; Frank Mustacato, vice-president and circulation director; Virginia L. Jespersen, vice-president and business manager; Lynn Guthrie Heiler, advertising director. Branch advertising offices: 111 East Wacker Drive, Chicago, Ill. 60601; 41 Osgood Place, San Francisco, Calif. 94133; Suite 1460, 5900 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90036; 67½ Chestnut St., Boston, Mass. 02108; 19 South Audley St., London, W1Y 5DN. Metropolitan Publishers Representatives: 3017 Piedmont Road, NE, Atlanta, Ga. 30305; 2500 So. Dixie Highway, Miami, Fla. 33133; 3016 Mason Place, Tampa, Fla. 33629; 3 Church St., Suite 503, Toronto, Canada. M5E 1M2. Vol. LXIV, No. 31, September 19, 1988. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. Authorized as second-class mail by the Post Office Department, Ottawa, Canada, and for payment of postage in cash. © 1988 by The New Yorker Magazine, Inc., in the United States and Canada. All rights reserved. No part of this periodical may be reproduced without the consent of The New Yorker. The magazine's name, logo, and various titles and headings herein have been registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Printed in U.S.A. Subscription rates: In U.S. and possessions, one year, \$32.00; two years, \$52.00. In Canada, one year, \$50.00. Other foreign, one year, \$56.00, payable in advance.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The New Yorker, Box 56447, Boulder, Colorado 80322.

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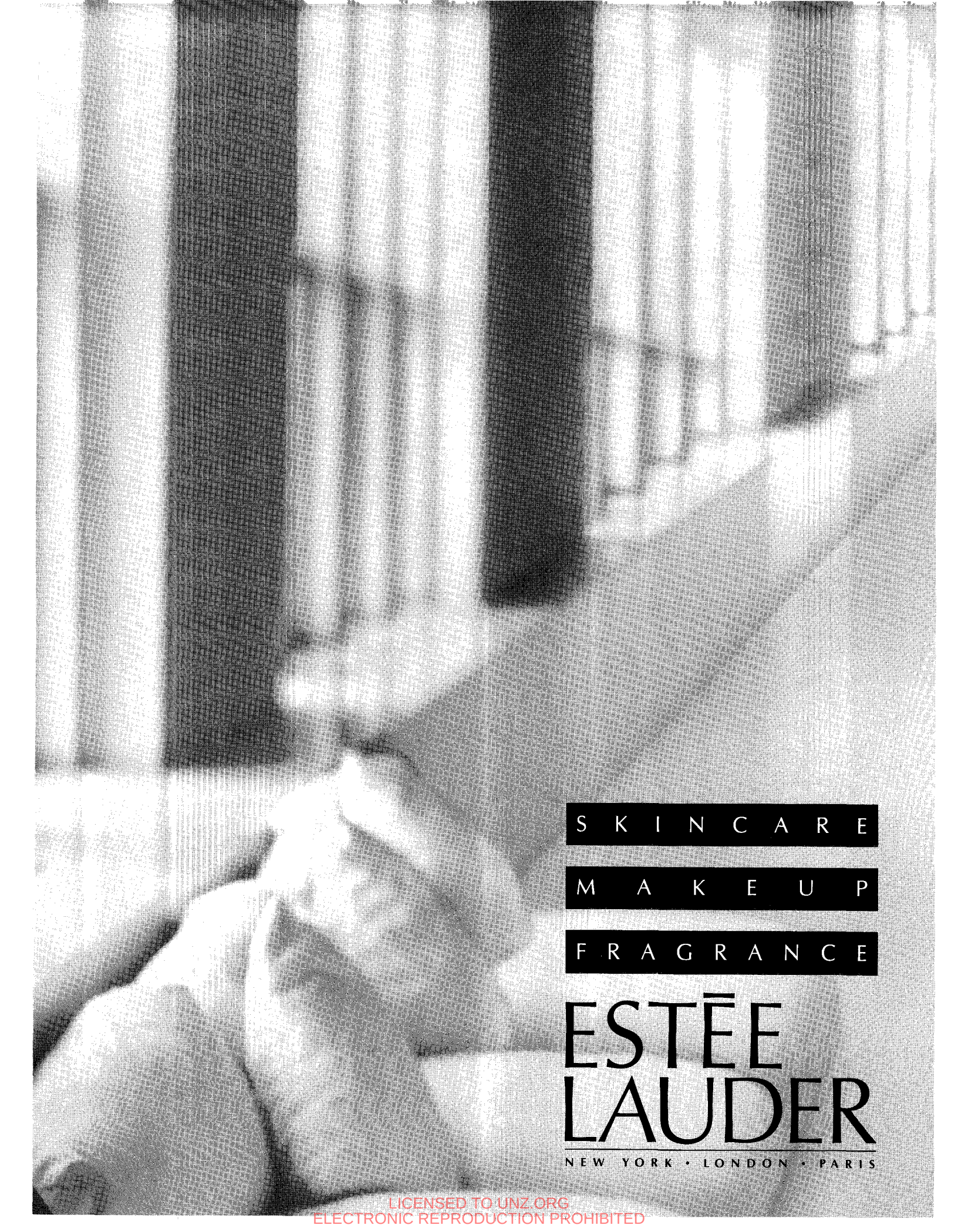
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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

PLAYS AND MUSICALS

AIN'T MISBEHAVIN'—A revival, after ten years, of this celebration of the music and the comic spirit of Fats Waller, in all its beauty and variety, as conceived and directed by Richard Maltby, Jr. The members of the original company are present and just as dynamic as they were the first time around. They are Nell Carter, Andre De Shields, Armelia McQueen, Ken Page, and Charlaime Woodard. The invaluable (and protean) Luther Henderson, conductor and arranger, again presides at the piano. (Reviewed in our issue of 9/5/88.) (Ambassador, 215 W. 49th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinees Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays at 3.)

BLUES IN THE NIGHT—A revised production of a 1980 musical conceived and directed by Sheldon Epps. With Carol Woods. Preview Tuesday, Sept. 13. Opens officially on Wednesday, Sept. 14, at 6:45. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000. Tuesdays through Fridays, except Thursday, Sept. 15, at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinees Sundays at 3.)

CHECKMATES—Ron Milner's "domestic comedy," about an older couple who lease the apartment above them to a recently married young couple, should be more entertaining than it is. There are some funny moments, though, and the performances are distinguished. The actors are Ruby Dee and Paul Winfield (downstairs) and Denzel Washington and Marsha Jackson (upstairs). Woodie King, Jr., directed. (46th Street Theatre, 226 W. 46th St. 246-0102. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

GODSPELL—A revival of the 1971 musical by Stephen Schwartz and John-Michael Tebelak. (Lambs, 130 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

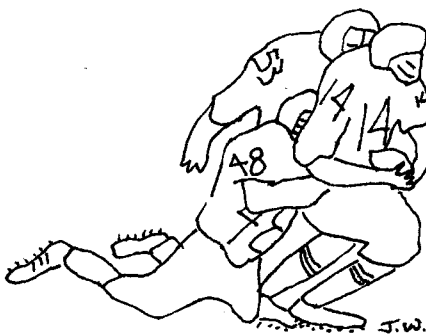
M. BUTTERFLY—David Henry Hwang's funny, mysterious, and often beautiful play is based on an actual case. A French diplomat takes as his mistress a star of the Beijing Opera, and some twenty years later—when they are both charged with being spies—discovers that "she" is a he. David Dukes is the diplomat; B. D. Wong is exceptional as his lover. Lori Tan Chinn and George N. Martin give them sound support. (4/4/88) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 246-0220. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

A MURDER OF CROWS—Kim Hunter and Michael Higgins in a new play by Ed Graczyk. Opens Wednesday, Sept. 14. (South Street Theatre, 424 W. 42nd St. 564-8038. Wednesdays through Sundays at 8. Matinees Saturdays at 2 and Sundays at 3.)

NEGRO ENSEMBLE COMPANY—Presenting **FROM THE MISSISSIPPI DELTA**, an ingenious play by Endesha Ida Mae Holland that, in a kind of dramatic collage, traces the life of a young woman from the fifties to the eighties. Brenda Denmark, LaTanya Richardson, and Gwen Roberts-Frost, three mettlesome actresses, portray her and an assortment of other characters, male and female. (9/5/88) (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 246-8545. Wednesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 8:30; and Sundays at 7. Matinees Saturdays at 3 and Sundays at 2:30. Closes Friday, Sept. 23.)

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA—The much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets (by Maria Björnson), everything about the show is negligible, including the overhyped performance of Michael Crawford in the title role. (2/8/88) (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

ROAD—This poignant and exhilarating new play by Jim Cartwright takes the audience on a night prow through a Lancashire slum



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and, by implication, on a spiritual tour of depressed Thatcherite England. The play is performed promenade style (the audience has the option of sitting or joining the actors onstage) by an exceptionally able cast. The production is not seamless, but it features some amazingly good acting, most notably from Kevin Bacon, Michael Wincott, and Jayne Haynes. Lincoln Center produced this interesting piece of theatre, which was directed by Simon Curtis, of the Royal Court Theatre, in London. (8/15/88) (La Mama Annex, 66 E. 4th St. 475-7710. Tuesday through Saturday at 8, and Sunday at 7:30. Matinees Saturday at 2 and Sunday at 3. Closes Sunday, Sept. 18.)

ROMANCE/ROMANCE—A pair of charming one-act musicals that have travelled successfully from Off to Broadway. Scott Bakula and Alison Fraser are as romantic as required in the leading roles. Barry Harman wrote the clever books and lyrics, and Keith Herrmann wrote the engaging scores. Mr. Harman directed. (5/16/88) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

SPEED-THE-PLOW—David Mamet's satire on Hollywood is just as scathing, just as acute as his "Glenagarry Glen Ross," and even funnier, if that can be imagined. With David Rasche, Bob Balaban, and Felicity Huffman; directed by Gregory Mosher. (5/16/88) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6277. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

TARTUFFE AND ROMEO AND JULIET—Two works in repertory, presented by the RAPP Theatre Company. Molière's **TARTUFFE** plays Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday evenings. **ROMEO AND JULIET** plays Wednesday and Friday evenings, and Saturday matinees. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200. Evenings at 8. Matinees at 2. Closes Saturday, Oct. 1.)

LONG RUNS—ANYTHING GOES: This exuberant revival is primarily a celebration of Cole Porter himself. The company, which includes Bill McCutcheon, Howard McGillin, Patti LuPone, and Kathleen Mahony-Bennett, does more than justice to the words and score. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) ... **BROADWAY BOUND**: A rueful comedy in which Neil Simon studies the middle-class depths from which he sprang and has kept springing. Joan Rivers plays Eugene Jerome's mother. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Nightly—except Sundays, Monday, Sept. 12 and Tuesday, Sept. 20—at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) ... **BURN THIS**: A play by Lanford Wilson, with Scott Glenn as a foulmouthed restaurant manager who woos and wins his dead brother's dancing partner. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinees Wednesdays

and Saturdays at 2.) ... **CATS**: Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to the sets and costumes by John Napier. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) ... **A CHORUS LINE**: A group of young dancers audition for a handful of chorus jobs in a show not yet in rehearsal, and by the time the evening is over we know everything about all of them. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) ... **DRIVING MISS DAISY**: Frances Sternhagen and Earle Hyman star in Alfred Uhry's play, which tells of the growing attachment of a cranky old woman in Atlanta to her black chauffeur. Directed by Ron Lagomarsino. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) ... **THE FANTASTICKS**: The longest long run recently turned twenty-eight. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinees Sundays at 3.) ... **42ND STREET**: A musical based on the old Warner Brothers movie, and by no means an improvement on it. Directed and choreographed by the late Gower Champion. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 398-0280. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8:15. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2:15, and Sundays at 3.) ... **FRANKIE AND JOHNNY IN THE CLAIR DE LUNE**: Bonnie Franklin and Tony Musante in Terrence McNally's enchanting comedy about sex and the sudden onset of love in an apartment on Tenth Avenue. (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8, and Saturdays at 7 and 10. Matinees Wednesdays at 2:30 and Sundays at 3.) ... **INTO THE WOODS**: This musical by Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine is an attempt to show what lurks beneath the surface of conventional fairy tales. The songs are beautiful or funny—sometimes both. Directed by Mr. Lapine. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-6363. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) ... **ME AND MY GIRL**: An infelicitously rehabilitated British musical out of the thirties, with Jim Dale. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 246-0102. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) ... **LES MISÉRABLES**: Tim Shew and Norman Large star in the musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel, but the real standouts of the production are the settings, by John Napier, and the lighting, by David Hersey. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinees Saturdays at 2.) ... **NUNSENSE**: A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) ... **OIL CITY SYMPHONY**: Mike Craver, Mark Hardwick, Michelle Horman, and Mary Murfitt, gifted and sophisticated singers and instrumentalists, appear as a quartet of dedicated hicks reuniting at their small-town high school in this very funny musical. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinees Sundays at 3.) ... **SARAFINA!**: This South African musical, an explosion of talent, was conceived, written, and directed by Mbongeni Ngema, who also, with Hugh Masekela, composed and arranged the score. The acting, dancing, and singing, to a local form of popular music called Mbaqanga, are a wonder. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) ... **A SHAYNA MAIDEL**: A well-wrought and deeply moving play by Barbara Lebow about a Polish-Jewish family torn apart by the events of the Hitler era. The production is beautifully directed by Mary B. Robinson. Bring lots of Kleenex to this one, but expect to leave uplifted. (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd

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• The Crystal Palace Hotel, Tianjin/PR China • The Swiss Grand Hotel, Seoul/Korea

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE—Cont'd

St. 541-8394. Tuesdays, except Sept. 20, through Saturdays at 8. Matinees Wednesdays, except Sept. 21, and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3. Special performance Monday, Sept. 19, at 8.)... **STARLIGHT EXPRESS:** A bore on roller skates. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 586-6510. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinees Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)... **STEEL MAGNOLIAS:** This first play by Robert Harling is set in a beauty shop in a small town in Louisiana and consists mainly of the often amusing, wisecracking chatter of the proprietress, her assistant, and four steady customers. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 6 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinees Sundays at 3.)

MISCELLANY

MOSCOW CIRCUS—Acrobats, clowns, trapeze artists, and skateboarding bears. Opens on Thursday, Sept. 15, and will run through Sunday, Oct. 9. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 757-3100. Thursday, Sept. 15, at 8; Friday, Sept. 16, at 2:30 and 8; Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 17-18, at 11, 2:30, and 7:30; Tuesday, Sept. 20, at 8; and Wednesday, Sept. 21, at 2:30 and 8.)

FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 1988—A new edition of the musical satire of Shubert Alley denizens. The lyrics to the song parodies are by Gerard Alessandrini. Previews Tuesday and Wednesday, Sept. 13-14. Opens officially on Thursday, Sept. 15, at 7. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8:30; Saturdays at 7:30 and 10:30; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinees Sundays at 3:30.)

WITHOUT YOU I'M NOTHING—Sandra Bernhard in a one-woman show. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477. Wednesdays and Thursdays at 8; Fridays and Saturdays at 8 and 10:30; and Sundays at 5:30 and 9. Closes Sunday, Oct. 2.)

JACKIE MASON'S "THE WORLD ACCORDING TO ME!"—The comedian's one-man show. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 719-4099. Wednesdays through Saturdays, and Tuesday, Sept. 13, at 8. Matinees Sundays at 3.)

TEN PERCENT REVUE—A musical revue by Tom Wilson Weinberg about gay life. (Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinees Sundays at 4.)

THE TAFFETAS—A revue of songs from the early fifties. Four female singers reprise the hits of Rosemary Clooney, Jo Stafford, the Lennon Sisters, and others. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinees Sundays at 3.)

LIGHT OPERA OF MANHATTAN—Presenting Victor Herbert's **THE RED MILL**. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000. Wednesday through Saturday at 8. Matinees Wednesday at 2 and Saturday and Sunday at 3:30. Closes Sunday, Sept. 18.)

NIGHT LIFE

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which bold-face type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

ANGRY SQUIRE, 216 Seventh Ave., at 23rd St. (242-9066)—A nautically appointed bar and restaurant. Any swaying you may notice yourself doing is probably generated by the musicians, who perform amidships on a railed-in platform. On Friday and Saturday, Sept. 16-17, **LODI CARR** sings with expert help from **HUGH LAWSON** (piano), **BOB CRANSHAW** (bass), and **KEITH COPELAND** (drums). First set at ten.

BALLROOM, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A big, soigné cabaret on the edge of Chelsea, in the heart of the fur and fashion-student districts. **BLOSSOM DEARIE** gives an early-bird show Wednesdays through Saturdays at six-thirty; Marilyn Sokol sings at nine Tuesdays through

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Saturdays; and Jeff McBride, a New Age magician, performs at eleven Wednesdays through Saturdays.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—A really blue but not really New York jazz club; the idea for the brass plaques that are engraved with the names of visiting jazz stars and embedded in the blue tables appears to have been borrowed from Hollywood. The master, **DIZZY GILLESPIE**, and his quintet play here Tuesday through Sunday, Sept. 13-18. On Tuesday, Sept. 13, Mr. Gillespie and a host of musicians, including his protégé **JON FADDIS**, will celebrate the club's seventh anniversary; this one night the music starts at seven. Beginning Tuesday, Sept. 20, a group led by **FLORA PURIM** and **AIRTO** will trade sets with pianist **MICHEL CAMILO**'s trio. First set at nine. Dining.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—On the east side of the building, behind a dusty display window, there's a New York *Post* review of a Santana concert that took place here circa 1978; curatorial neglect seems to have made it a permanent exhibit. **STEVE FORBERT**, who has been absent from the recording scene since 1982, is back with an outstanding new album, "Streets of This Town." The Meridian, Miss., native and former New Yorker has been spending time in Nashville, and the new disk is country-tinged rock and roll that tells of some triumph ("I was runnin' on loneliness/ Now I'm runnin' on love") and more than a little despair ("And you say you don't see it when a grown man starts to cry/ You turn your face away and you walk on by"). Mr. Forbert is a consistently engaging live performer, and he will be here with a band on Sunday and Monday, Sept. 18-19. Another fine singer-guitarist, **CINDY LEE BERRYHILL**, is also on the bill. The rest of the schedule: Wednesday and Thursday, Sept. 14-15, veteran rock-and-roll man **LONNIE MACK**; Friday, Sept. 16, **TONI CHILDS**, a strong-voiced singer with world-beat inclinations (choirs from Swaziland and Zambia sing backup on her debut album, "Union"); Saturday, Sept. 17, **KARLA BONOFF**; and Tuesday, Sept. 20, a jazz night, with the **DONALD HARRISON-TERENCE BLANCHARD** quintet and Full Circle. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at eight and eleven, and Fridays and Saturdays at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty. Dining.

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A neighborhood bar, famous in this precinct and the wider world for its pianists, bassists, and, lately, horn players; a barstool sometimes serves as a good viewing perch, and sometimes doesn't (standees abound on peak nights). Bassist **RED MITCHELL**, a pillar of strength in this room, works with pianist **MIKE MELVOIN** through Saturday, Sept. 17. On Sunday, Sept. 18, Mr. Mitchell, trombonist **JIMMY KNEPPER**, and pianist **ROGER KELLAWAY** provide some trio music. **FREDDY COLE**, Nat's younger brother, moves in with his trio starting Monday, Sept. 19. Music from nine-forty-five. Dining.

CARLOS I, 432 Sixth Ave., at 10th St. (982-

3260)—Long communal tables swathed in pink and a bandstand panelled in oak. **IRENE REID**, a Georgia-born singer who came up in the forties as a Dinah Washington admirer and later passed through the Basie band, performs Tuesday through Sunday, Sept. 13-18. **AL GREY**, a Basie-ite for many years and a master of plunger-style trombone, directs a quintet starting Tuesday, Sept. 20. Mondays belong to baritone-sax man **HAMMET BLUIETT** and his big band. Music from nine.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—**RONNY WHYTE** plays piano and sings in the Bemelmans Bar from nine-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—There's not a lot of elbow- or headroom in this downstairs jazz club, but the musicians sometimes make you forget all about it. The jazz people: Marc Cohen and his trio Tuesday through Thursday, Sept. 13-15; saxophonist-clarinetist Sudan Baronian and his band, Taksim, Friday through Sunday, Sept. 16-18; and bassist **NEILS-HENNING ORSTED PEDERSEN** and his group starting Tuesday, Sept. 20. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL**, the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

FORTUNE GARDEN PAVILION, 209 E. 49th St. (753-0101)—A satisfying combination of Chinese food and homegrown music. Rubberneckers may see the moon wheeling by the greenhouse roof on its nightly tour of romantic Manhattan. **JUDY CARMICHAEL**, a young California pianist who likes to play in the old Harlem stride style, leads a trio Tuesday through Sunday, Sept. 13-18. Music from nine-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays, and from seven on Sundays.

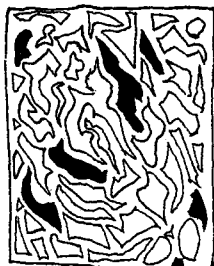
GREENE STREET, 101 Greene St. (925-2415)—Only slightly smaller than an airplane hangar, but considerably fancier. The piano, situated in a grove of palms in the south-central region of the dining room, is visible from the bar on clear nights. The pianists: **PETER MALINVERNI** Tuesday through Saturday, Sept. 13-17, and **HILTON RUIZ** starting Tuesday, Sept. 20. Sets begin at seven Tuesdays through Thursdays, and at seven-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays. Closed Mondays.

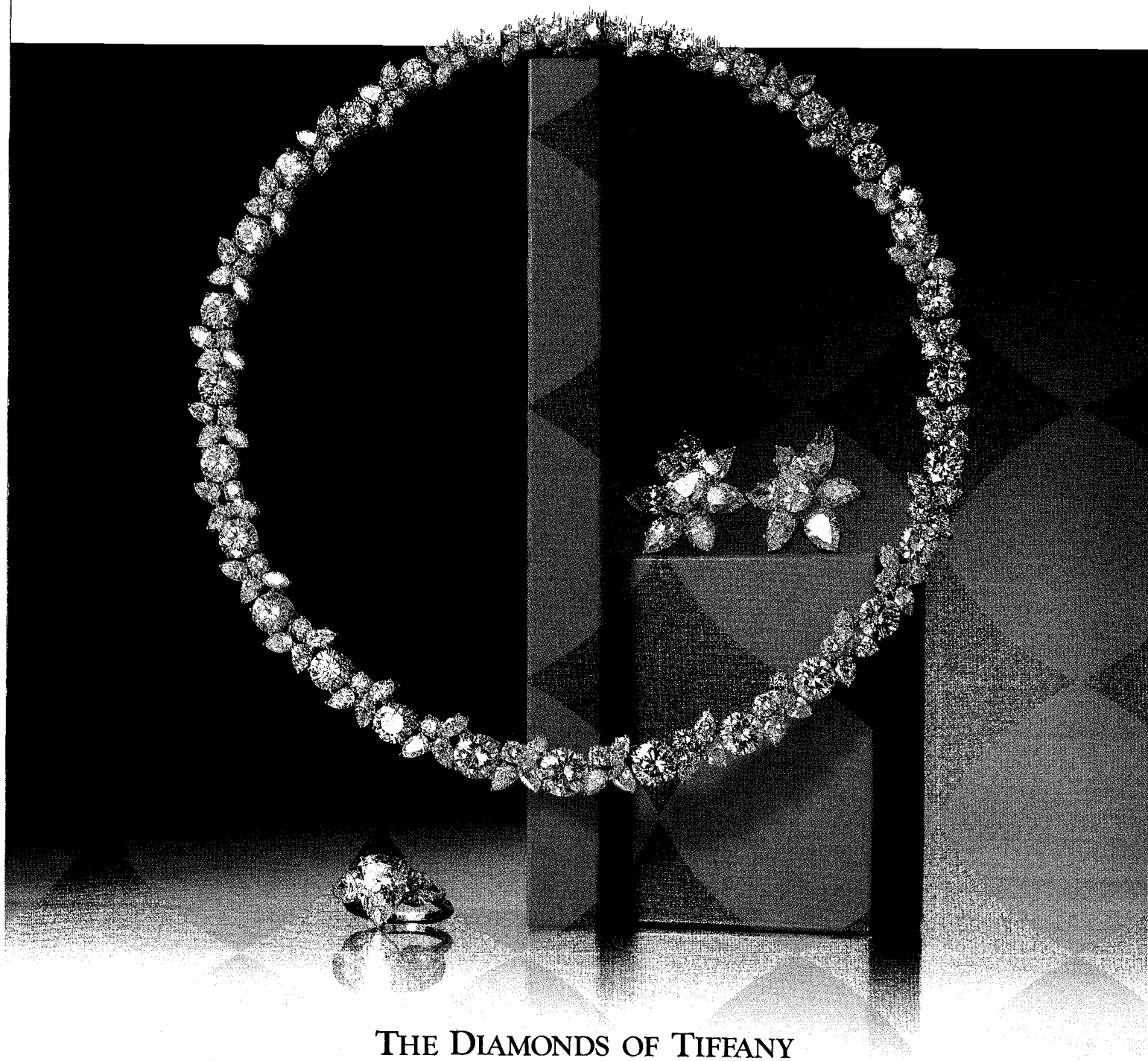
J's, 2581 Broadway, at 97th St. (666-3600)—An Upper West Side music room, one flight up from the hurly-burly. Jazz people are on the premises nightly except Sundays, when a jukebox stocked with sixties rock and soul lights up. The club reopens, after a brief summer vacation, on Tuesday, Sept. 13, with **RICHARD RODNEY BENNETT**; he'll be here again on Tuesday, Sept. 20. The rest of the lineup: Wednesday, Sept. 14, pianist **JOEL FORRESTER**'s trio; Thursday, Sept. 15, guitar whiz **JOHN PIZZARELLI**'s trio; Friday, Sept. 16, the **KEN PEPOWSKI** band; Saturday, Sept. 17, **DEUCE**, a quintet led by trumpeter **ELLEN SEELENG** and tenor saxophonist **JEAN FINEBERG**; Monday, Sept. 19, pianist **DICK HYMAN**; and Wednesday, Sept. 21, pianist Virg Dzurinko's trio. Music from eight Mondays through Thursdays, and from nine Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

JAN WALLMAN'S, 49 W. 44th St. (764-8930)—A cozy room for singers and their followers, cheek by jowl with the Iroquois Hotel. On Mondays, **RITA GARDNER** sings songs by Bart Howard ("Fly Me to the Moon," "Year After Year"), with help from **BUDDY BARNES**, Mabel Mercer's onetime accompanist. **BARBARA LEA**, a pippin of a singer, is here on Saturday, Sept. 17. Shows at nine and eleven. Dining. Closed Sundays.

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—A busy corner bar and restaurant with a piano, currently manned by **STEVE KUHN**, at the center of things. **RON CARTER** is his bassist; they play Tuesdays through Saturdays. Pianist **HARRY CONNICK, JR.**, the latest good news from New Orleans, flies all by himself on Sundays and Mondays. Music from nine-thirty.

KNITTING FACTORY, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—A second-floor retreat that features avant-garde jazz, advanced and unadvanced rock, medicinal teas, medicinal beer, and space to think your thoughts in. Mondays belong to **JEMEEL MOONDOC'S** Jus Grew Orchestra and Wednesdays to **THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS**. Tuesday, Sept. 13, the **HANK**





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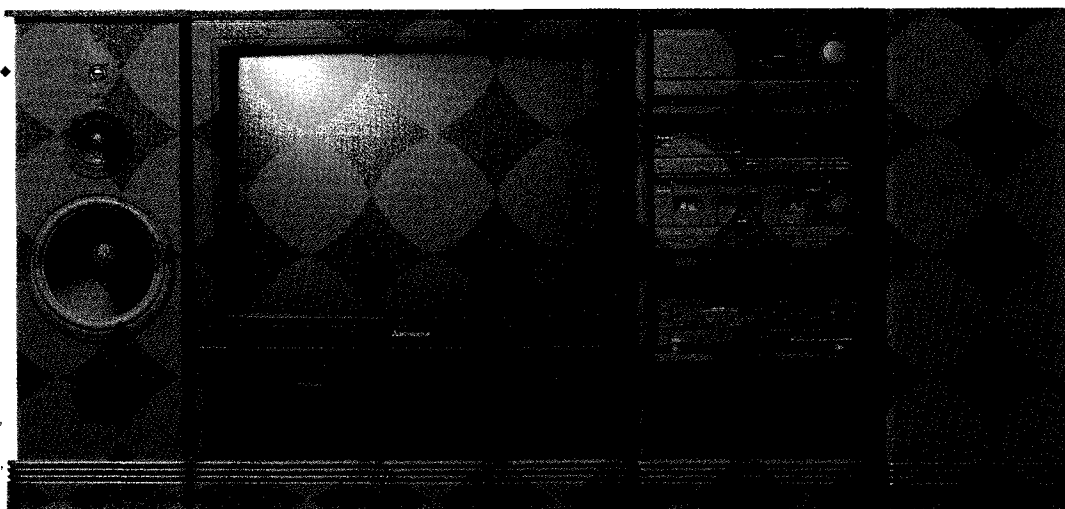


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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

NIGHT LIFE—Cont'd

ROBERTS group; Thursday, Sept. 15, singer Nora York; Friday through Sunday, Sept. 16-18, reedman **ANTHONY BRAXTON's** quartet; and Tuesday, Sept. 20, Marty Willson-Piper, a guitarist in the Australian outfit the Church, in two solo acoustic sets. Music after nine.

LONE STAR CAFÉ, 61 Fifth Ave., at 13th St. (242-1664)—This hangout for homesick Texans, French tourists, and local yokels brags that it's "the biggest and best honky-tonk north of Abilene." Big it ain't, but it does feature some genuine honky-tonk music, a souvenir stand, and TV monitors (which permit you to watch the action onstage in case your view of it is obscured by a cowboy or a structural element). The lineup, in part: Tuesday, Sept. 13, Little Charlie & the Nightcats, a West Coast blues combo, and on Friday and Saturday, Sept. 16-17, rockabilly singer **ROBERT GORDON**. Music after nine. Hot vittles.

LONE STAR CAFÉ ROADHOUSE, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—The midtown branch of the aforementioned establishment. The façade is a Silver Eagle bus, the kind your itinerant musician cat tools around in. The inside features some stuff you probably wouldn't find in a county-line roadhouse—like a wall full of deluxe Gibson guitars—and some you might expect to find: beer, neon beer signs, and men wearing dozer caps. Tuesday, Sept. 13, New York City Swing; Thursday, Sept. 15, the **DEL-LORDS**, a Gotham rock-and-roll band; and Sunday, Sept. 18, some gentlemen from Spartanburg, S.C., known as the Marshall Tucker Band. Music after nine. Dining. Closed Wednesday, Sept. 14.

MICHAEL'S PUB, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A mid-Manhattan pub for well-heeled gents and their high-heeled foxes. Author **MEL TORMÉ** (his autobiography, "It Wasn't All Velvet," is due out in October) sings here Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine and eleven. Dining. Closed Sundays.

MIKELL'S, 760 Columbus Ave., at 97th St. (864-8832)—A spiffy uptown bar and restaurant, with signed photographs of some swinging non-musicians on the walls (Reggie Jackson smiling shyly, Dave Winfield tuning up in the cage) and some heavy hitters on the bandstand. **ART BLAKEY** and his youthful crew of **JAZZ MESSENGERS** preside on Friday and Saturday, Sept. 16-17. Music from about ten until two.

RED BLAZER TOO, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—A big, busy theatre-district establishment devoted to traditional jazz (big- and little-band Swing, several varieties of Dixieland). Music from six on Sundays, from eight-thirty Mondays through Thursdays, and from nine Fridays and Saturdays.

RITZ, 119 E. 11th St. (254-2800)—Fifty years ago, people practiced the jitterbug and the foxtrot in this ballroom; today's patrons listen mainly to rock, which issues from speakers the size of mobile homes, and sometimes engage in a combination of exercise and intimacy known as slam dancing. Wednesday, Sept. 14, Pat Benatar; Friday, Sept. 16, Urban Blight; Saturday, Sept. 17, **PERE UBU** and **JOHN CALE**; and Tuesday, Sept. 20, Robyn Hitchcock & the Egyptians. Shows begin at nine Sundays through Thursdays, and at eleven Fridays and Saturdays.

SOUNDS OF BRAZIL, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A big, cheerful room, painted a light tropical blue, where you can pick 'em up and set 'em down to sounds from Brazil, Africa, the Caribbean, and elsewhere. Ample seating for the contemplative. Wednesday, Sept. 14, R.P.M., a Brazilian rock group; Thursday, Sept. 15, **MARIO BAUZA** and his orchestra, featuring vocalist **GRACIELA**; Friday, Sept. 16, the System Band; and Saturday, Sept. 17, **MIKATA**. Music from nine Tuesdays through Thursdays and from ten on Fridays and Saturdays. Dining. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

SPEAKEASY, 107 Macdougall St. (598-9670)—A central Village lounge for folkies and others who practice low-decibel (but not necessarily low-voltage) music. On Friday, Sept. 16, banjo man **TONY TRISCHKA** and his band, **SKYLINE**, have the floor, and on Saturday, Sept. 17, **DAVE VAN RONK** will be the focus of attention.

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Shows nightly from about eight-thirty. Dining.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—**MC COY TYNER**, a pianist whose thundering, rhythmically insistent style works like an incantation on many people, holds forth in this Village meetinghouse Tuesday through Sunday, Sept. 13-18. Bassist **AVERY SHARPE** and drummer **LOUIS HAYES** accompany him. Mondays belong to **ART BLAKEY & THE JAZZ MESSENGERS**. Shows from ten. Dining.

VILLAGE GATE, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—In the gym-size downstairs room, Latin-jazz bands play for their excitable fans on Mondays after nine-thirty. **WILLE COLÓN** and his orchestra, **MARIO RIVERA & THE SALSA REFUGEES**, and blues singer **LEON THOMAS** whoop it up on Sept. 12; trumpeter **JON FADDIS** is the guest soloist with **MONGO SANTAMARIA** and his group and with **JERRY GONZALEZ & THE FORT APACHE BAND** on Sept. 19. On Friday and Saturday, Sept. 16-17, the **LOUNGE LIZARDS** play at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty. . . . One flight up, in the airy space known as the Terrace Bar, pianist **JUNIOR MANCE** and bassist **MARTY RIVERA** collaborate nightly except Mondays. On Tuesdays they trades sets with **HELLMAN'S ANGELS**, a string trio whose head angel, **DAPHNE HELLMAN**, plays the harp. Music from ten.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—People from all over the world descend the stairs to this ancient jazz club; many of them later emerge from it in an excited condition. A first-rate trio composed of pianist **TOMMY FLANAGAN**, bassist **GEORGE MRAZ**, and drummer **KENNY WASHINGTON** will be on hand Tuesday through Sunday, Sept. 13-18. Alto saxophonist **BOBBY WATSON**, a graduate of Art Blakey's Jazz Messenger academy, comes in with a quintet starting Tuesday, Sept. 20. Mondays are prime time for **MEL LEWIS's** big band. Music from ten.

WEST END, 2911 Broadway, at 113th St. (666-8750)—The big room in this student rest stop (Columbia U. is across the street) has a non-institutional cafeteria, a bar that can seat a marching band, and a jukebox. The smaller room has tables, booths, a couple of hanging plants, and live jazz. A combo led by tenor saxophonist **HOUSTON PERSON** and singer **ETTA JONES** performs Thursday through Sunday, Sept. 15-18. On Mondays, comedians stand up and fall down. Shows from about nine.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—If you like pictures of cows, there's a good one here, by the British painter Malcolm Morley, of some Holsteins adrift in a Turneresque landscape. There's also jazz, which flows peaceably from a passageway between the front-room bar and the back-room restaurant. Pianist **JANE**

JARVIS and bassist **MILT HINTON** work in tandem through Saturday, Sept. 17; Sundays are in the nimble hands of guitarist **GENE BERTONCINI** and bassist **MICHAEL MOORE**. Music weeknights from eight and Sundays from seven.

JAZZ / ROCK / PERSONAL APPEARANCES / PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

GRATEFUL DEAD—Madison Square Garden. 563-8300. Wednesday through Friday, Sept. 14-16, and Sunday through Tuesday, Sept. 18-20, at 7:30. Through Saturday, Sept. 24.

PAUL ZALOOM—Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Wednesday, Sept. 14, and Friday and Saturday, Sept. 16-17, at 8; Sunday, Sept. 18, at 3; and Wednesday, Sept. 21, at 8. Through Sunday, Sept. 25.

BRUCE HORNSBY & THE RANGE—With Melissa Etheridge. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Thursday and Friday, Sept. 15-16, at 8.)

JIM NEU—In his play "An Evening with Jesse James." (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Friday, Sept. 16, at 10, and Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 17-18, at 8. Through Sunday, Sept. 25.)

DAVID BENOIT QUINTET—Jazzport, 210 Front St. 608-7889. Friday, Sept. 16, at 8 and 10, and Saturday, Sept. 17, at 8, 10, and midnight.

THE PERSUASIONS—Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. 662-2133. Saturday, Sept. 17, at 8:30.

MIRIAM MAKEBA AND HUGH MASEKELA—Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Wednesday, Sept. 21, at 8.

ALL-AMERICAN PIANO MUSIC—A four-concert series of twentieth-century classical, pop, and jazz compositions. Saturday, Sept. 17, at 8:30: Bennett Lerner, Ursula Oppens, and others. . . . Sunday, Sept. 18, at 1: Judy Carmichael, Leo Smit, John Van Buskirk, and others. . . . Sunday, Sept. 18, at 4:30: Tommy Flanagan, Margaret Leng Tan, Nurrit Tilles, and others. . . . Sunday, Sept. 18, at 8: Geri Allen, Leon Bates, Christopher O'Riley, and others. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719.)

ART

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

RONA PONDICK—An installation of beds constructed with satin, wood, lead, and bronze. Through Oct. 1. (Sculpture Center, 167 E. 69th St.)

GROUP SHOWS—At the **GRAHAM**, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St.: Paintings from the thirties and forties by Eleanor de Laitre, Alice Trumbull Mason, and Agnes Weinrich, among others. Through Oct. 1. . . . **HIRSCHL & ADLER MODERN**, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St.: Photographs by Sigmar Polke, and prints by Joseph Beuys and Cy Twombly. Through Oct. 1. (Open Mondays.) . . . **KNOEDLER**, 19 E. 70th St.: Drawings by four sculptors: Nancy Graves, Herbert Ferber, Michael Heizer, and David Smith. Through Oct. 6.

GALLERIES—57TH STREET AREA

WILLIAM BECKMAN—Two double portraits of the artist and his wife, and the studies for them. Through Oct. 19. (Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St.)

STEVEN CAMPBELL—Recent paintings. Through Oct. 1. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

ROBERT GOODNOUGH AND DAVID HARE—Abstract paintings and sculptures by each artist. Through Oct. 8. (Shippee, 41 E. 57th St.)

JAN GROOVER / LEE KRASNER (1908-84)—Photographs / Abstract impastoed paintings from the late thirties and early forties. Through Oct. 1. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

JOHN STUART INGLE—Realist still-lives. Through Sept. 30. (Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St.)

ALAN JOHNSTON—Stylized gesso-and-charcoal paintings and bronze sculptures. Through Oct. 1. (Tilton, 24 W. 57th St.)

BENJAMIN LIRA—Emblematic figures recur in



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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

ART-Cont'd

these recent paintings, some of which have sand or marble dust mixed in the medium. Through Oct. 5. (Ruth Siegel, 24 W. 57th St.)

GEORGE NICK—Plein-air cityscapes and landscapes of Boston and its environs. Through Oct. 5. (Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St.)

LEIGH PALMER AND JEANNE REVEGNO—Still-lives and interiors by each painter. Through Oct. 1. (French, 41 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

RODNEY RIPPES—Stripe paintings with three-dimensional wood protrusions. Through Oct. 8. (Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St.)

JAMES WOLFE / LAWRENCE POONS—New abstract sculptures constructed with ribbons of twisted steel. Through Oct. 8. / New paintings. Through Oct. 1. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

GROUP SHOWS—At the **DE NAGY**, 41 W. 57th St.: Works in mixed mediums by artists who make use of computers in the development of their work. Patricia Search, Tony Robbin, and Larry Cuba are among them. Through Sept. 29. . . . **SCHMIDT BINGHAM**, 41 W. 57th St.: Landscapes by Alan Magee, Jane Freilicher, Tom Uttech, Peter Poskas, and Frederick Brosen. Through Oct. 15. (Open Mondays.) . . . **SCHOELKOPF**, 50 W. 57th St.: Geometric paintings and works on paper by, among others, Josef Albers and Charmion von Wiegand. Through Oct. 12.

GALLERIES—SoHo

DOUG ANDERSON—Paintings done on what the gallery calls "groovy sixties polka-dot fabric." Through Oct. 1. (Stux, 155 Spring St.)

JOSEPH BEUYS (1921-86)—An installation entitled "Half Time," documenting the artist's 1982 planting of seven thousand oak trees in West Germany. Through Oct. 15. (Gallery Moos, 133 Greene St.)

FREDERICK CHILDS—Paintings. Through Oct. 8. (Brown, 560 Broadway.)

EDGAR FRANCESCHI—Paintings. Through Oct. 1. (Allen, 560 Broadway.)

JACK GOLDSTEIN / SUSAN LEOPOLD—Paintings done with phosphorescent paint. / Miniature cityscapes, street corners, and interiors set in boxes, each of which is to be viewed through a wide-angle lens. Through Oct. 1. (Weber, 142 Greene St.)

JAN HÄFSTRÖM—Constructions incorporating wood, found objects, fabric, and paint. Through Oct. 5. (Germans van Eck, 420 West Broadway.)

MARGO HERR—Paintings inspired by ancient stone monuments in the British Isles. Through Sept. 24. (55 Mercer Street Gallery.)

MIKE KELLEY—Drawings, banners, and objects, many of which display a scatological sense of humor. Through Oct. 1. (Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St.)

BRUCE NAUMAN—Two conceptual video works (from 1970) that combine steel, a video monitor, and polyurethane foam. Through Oct. 15. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St.)

SANDY SKOGLUND—An installation. Through Oct. 1. (Brandt, 568 Broadway.)

ALAN TURNER—Paintings. Through Oct. 1. (Koury Wingate, 578 Broadway.)

ELLEN WIENER—Abstract works on paper. Through Oct. 13. (Pearl, 420 West Broadway.)

CLEMENS WEISS—An installation of transparent boxes that hold drawings, paintings, writings, and objects. Through Oct. 8. (Feldman, 31 Mercer St.)

GROUP SHOWS—At the **BEITZEL**, 113 Greene St.: Paintings by Aaron Fink, Lois Lane, and others. Through Oct. 1. . . . **BERNARDUCCI**, 560 Broadway: New York City as seen in the paintings, photographs, and works on paper of Matthew Radford, Charles Saxon, Phyllis Rosenblatt, and others. Through Oct. 1. . . . **COOPER**, 155 Wooster St.: A twentieth-anniversary show. Through Sept. 28. . . . **DAVIS**, 568 Broadway: Unpainted metal wall sculptures by Lisa Hoke, Jannis Kounellis, Donald Judd, and others. Through Oct. 1. . . . **THE DRAWING CENTER**, 35 Wooster St.: Drawings by sixteen artists. Through Oct. 1. (Open Wednesday evenings until 8.) . . . **HOFFMAN**, 429 West Broadway: Geometric works in various me-

diums by Howard Buchwald, Rupert Deese, Christopher Lane, and John Okulick. Through Oct. 12. . . . **MARCUS**, 578 Broadway: Sculptures and photographs by Ian Hamilton Finlay, Ian Wallace, Sam Samore, and Paul Graham. Through Oct. 1. . . . **M-13**, 72 Greene St.: Paintings by four Expressionists: Robert Beauchamp, Adolf Benca, Ford Crull, and Loren Munk. Through Oct. 8. . . . **SOHO 20**, 469 Broome St.: Paintings and sculptures by Penny Kaplan, Lucy Sallick, Shirley Gorelick, and others. Through Oct. 1. (Opens at noon.) . . . **STEINBAUM**, 132 Greene St.: "Beyond the Tradition of Quiltmaking," with works by Terrie Hancock Mangat, Therese May, and Gayle Fraas and Duncan Slade. Through Oct. 4. . . . **TOLL**, 146 Greene St.: Abstract sculptures by Lillian Ball, Patrick Strzelec, and Steve Wood. Through Oct. 1.

OTHER GALLERIES

PERRY HOBBERMAN—Wall sculptures. Through Oct. 9. (Postmasters, 66 Avenue A, near 4th St. Opens at noon Wednesdays through Sundays.)

GROUP SHOW—Works in various mediums by John Franklin, Julia Fish, Polly Apfelbaum, Mel Chin, and others. Through Oct. 9. (Loughelton, 19 Second Ave., at 1st St. Opens at noon Wednesdays through Sundays.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

GÜNTHER FÖRG—Large-scale photographs of European architecture, plus watercolors. Through Oct. 1. (Luhning Augustine & Hodes, 41 E. 57th St.)

KEN HEYMAN—Pictures of city life by a photographer who shoots from the hip. Through Oct. 8. (Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. Opens at noon.)

ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE—The Whitney Museum has mounted a show of his photographs. See below, under "Museums," for dates and times.

GEANNA MEROLA—Painted photographs. Through Oct. 1. (Lieberman & Saul, 155 Spring St. Opens at noon on Saturdays.)

ARNOLD NEWMAN—A retrospective. Through Oct. 30. (New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St.)

NICHOLAS NIXON—A show of his work will open this week at the Museum of Modern Art. See below, under "Museums," for dates and times.

DON WORTH—A retrospective of prints by an artist who takes closeups of cacti and tropical flowers. Through Oct. 15. (Witkin, 415 West Broadway. Opens at noon on Saturdays.)

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—A retrospective of works by Umberto Boccioni, an Italian Futurist painter and the only sculptor in the movement. Starts Thursday, Sept. 15. . . . ¶ A selection of watercolors and drawings by Paul Cézanne from the last thirty years of his life. Through Nov. 6. . . . ¶ Arata Isozaki's study of the entrance to the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles is among the acquisitions of architectural drawings, prints, and books on display; others range from the sixteenth century to the present and come from Europe and America. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Tuesday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—A comprehensive show of the drawings of Philip Guston, a leading Abstract Expressionist, who, late in his career, did a series of controversial works inventorying his studio and himself. Through Nov. 1. . . . **PHOTOGRAPHY**: About a hundred prints by Nicholas Nixon. Starts Thursday, Sept. 15. (Open daily except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—A loan show of sixty modern paintings from the National Gallery in Prague, consisting entirely of works that are in America for the first time. The artists include Cézanne, Chagall, Klimt, Gauguin, and Matisse, and their Czech counterparts. Through Sunday, Sept. 18. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 11 to 7:45, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 4:45.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—Frank Gehry's architecture is surveyed in more than two hundred and fifty drawings, photographs, and models. The projects represented include the Fishdance Restaurant in Kobe, Japan, and the Laser Laboratory Building at the University of Iowa in Iowa City. Also on display are several walk-through constructions. Through Oct. 2. . . . **PHOTOGRAPHY**: Fifteen years' worth of Robert Mapplethorpe's prints are represented in a show of nudes, portraits, and still-lives. Through Oct. 23. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Eastern Parkway—Lithographs, etchings, and woodcuts by early-twentieth-century German Expressionists—Beckmann, Schiele, Nolde, and Kirchner among them. Starts Thursday, Sept. 15. . . . **“The Uses of Photography in Contemporary Art,”** a small exhibit from the permanent collection, with works by Julie Wachtel, Ellen Carey, and David Hockney. Through Oct. 10. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 10 to 5.)

CHINA INSTITUTE, 125 E. 65th St.—A hundred or so stone and bronze tomb artifacts with carvings (of farmers, street markets, lovers) that reflect daily life in Sichuan during the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-220 A.D.). Starts Saturday, Sept. 17. (Open Mondays through Saturdays, 10 to 5.)

COOPER-HEWITT MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—In the seventeenth century, the cupboards and drawers of Burghley House, in Devonshire, were filled with Renaissance jewelry, pitchers with diamonds and rubies embedded in them, and gold and silver tableware. Sixty of these objets de vertu, preserved as heirlooms, have been brought here for display. Through Nov. 27. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 10 to 9; with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

GROlier CLUB, 47 E. 60th St.—A retrospective of etchings, woodcuts, and lithographs by the English painter Graham Sutherland (1903-1980). The prints range from pastoral landscapes to expressionistic renderings of birds and insects. Through Sept. 30. (Open Mondays through Fridays, 10 to 5.)

MORGAN LIBRARY, 29 E. 36th St.—An exhibit of roughly a hundred music scores by, among others, Bach, Mahler, Arthur Sullivan, and Mozart (several by the last; the work on view that he composed at the age of five is in his father's hand). Through Nov. 6. . . . **“A display of illuminated manuscripts that depict medieval and Renaissance dances and musical instruments.”** Through Oct. 30. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF DESIGN, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—Sixty Dutch and Flemish paintings, all on loan from private collections, including Van Dyck's “Apostle Peter” and “Apostle Thomas,” and Frans Hals' “Portrait of Samuel Ampzing.” Through Sept. 25. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

THE NEW MUSEUM, 583 Broadway—Malcolm McLaren, the subject of what the museum describes as “an unconventional art exhibition,” has been called many things—most generously, rock producer, fashion designer, and cultural theorist. This collection of clothes, posters, album covers, cassettes, and videotapes follows McLaren's career as it bounced from the Sex Pistols to Adam and the Ants to a British fashion/bondage shop called Let It Rock. Starts Friday, Sept. 16. (Open daily except Mondays and Tuesdays. Hours: Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, noon to 8.)

MUSIC

NEW YORK CITY OPERA—Wednesday evening, Sept. 14: “Madame Butterfly,” with Young Mi Kim, Cynthia Rose, Stefano Algieri, and William Parcher; conducted by Scott Bergeson. . . . **Thursday evening, Sept. 15: “Rigoletto,”** with Faith Esham, Susanne Marsee, Brent Ellis, and Richard Leech; Elio

Boncompagni. . . . **Friday evening, Sept. 16: “The Merry Widow,”** with Leigh Munro, Susanne Marsee, Richard White, and Michael Cousins; Imre Pallo. . . . **Saturday matinee, Sept. 17: “Lucia di Lammermoor,”** with Sheryl Woods, Michael Sylvester, William Stone, and Harry Dworkak; Scott Bergeson. . . . **Saturday evening, Sept. 17: Jay Reise's “Rasputin”** (premiere), with Margaret Cusack, John Cheek, Jon Garrison, and Henry Price; Christopher Keene. . . . **Sunday matinee, Sept. 18: “Die Zauberflöte,”** with Elizabeth Hynes, Virginia Sublett, Paul Austin Kelly, and Jan Opalach; Sergiu Comissiona. . . . **Sunday evening, Sept. 18: “La Traviata,”** with Frances Ginsberg, Ron Peo, and Robert Ferrier; Michael Morgan. . . . **Wednesday evening, Sept. 21: “Rigoletto,”** with Faith Esham, Susanne Marsee, Brent Ellis, and Richard Leech; Elio Boncompagni. (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Wednesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7. Matinees Saturdays at 2 and Sundays at 1. Through Sunday, Nov. 20.)

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC—Zubin Mehta conducting. Wednesday, Sept. 14, at 7:30: A nonsubscription concert for the benefit of the Philharmonic. Isaac Stern will be the soloist in Beethoven's Violin Concerto. . . . **Friday and Saturday, Sept. 16-17, and Monday, Sept. 19, at 8:** A program of music by Webern, Schoenberg, and Schubert. (Avery Fisher Hall. 874-2424.)

JUDITH FARRIS—Contralto. (Alice Tully Hall. 362-1911. Tuesday, Sept. 13, at 8.)

NEIL RUTMAN—Piano. Tony Randall, in the role of the narrator, will join the pianist for Poulenc's “The Story of Babar the Little Elephant.” (Alice Tully Hall. 362-1911. Wednesday, Sept. 14, at 8.)

ACADEMY OF ANCIENT MUSIC CHAMBER ENSEMBLE—Playing a Schubert octet and a Mozart quintet. (Kathryn Bache Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. Friday, Sept. 16, at 8. For information about tickets, call 280-2875.)

AMATO OPERA—Presenting the American premiere of Carlos Gomes's 1889 opera “Lo Schiavo.” (Marymount Manhattan Theatre, 221 E. 71st St. Saturday, Sept. 17, at 7:30, and Sunday, Sept. 18, at 2:30. For information about tickets, call 228-8200.)

Fou Ts'ong—Piano. (Alice Tully Hall. 362-1911. Saturday, Sept. 17, at 8.)

LUCIANO PAVAROTTI—With James Levine, piano. (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000. Sunday, Sept. 18, at 6.)

SPORTS

(The ticket-information number for the Meadowlands is 1-201 935-3900, for Nassau Coliseum 1-516 587-9222, for Shea Stadium 1-718 507-8499, and for Yankee Stadium 293-6000.)

BASEBALL—METS at Shea Stadium: Vs. Pittsburgh, Monday and Tuesday, Sept. 12-13, at 7:35. . . . **Chicago**, Wednesday, Sept. 14, at 7:35, and Thursday, Sept. 15, at 1:35. . . . **Montreal**, Friday, Sept. 16, at 7:35; Saturday, Sept. 17, at 1:20; and Sunday, Sept. 18, at 1:35. . . . **Philadelphia**, Tuesday and Wednesday, Sept. 20-21, at 7:35. . . . **YANKEES** at Yankee Stadium: Vs. Baltimore, Monday through Wednesday, Sept. 19-21, at 7:30.

FOOTBALL—Jets vs. Houston Oilers. (Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands. Sunday, Sept. 18, at 1.)

HOCKEY—Exhibition games at Nassau Coliseum: Islanders vs. Philadelphia Flyers, Saturday, Sept. 17, at 7:05. . . . **Islanders vs. Montreal Canadiens**, Tuesday, Sept. 20, at 8:05.

RACING—At BELMONT: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1; through Monday, Oct. 17. The Woodward Handicap and the Flower Bowl Handicap, Saturday, Sept. 17; the Futurity, Sunday, Sept. 18. . . . **MEADOWLANDS**: Weeknights at 7:30.

ET ALIA

“NEW YORK IS BOOK COUNTRY”—The annual book fair will take place on Fifth Avenue between Forty-eighth and Fifty-seventh Streets on Sunday, Sept. 18, from 11 to 5.

WASHINGTON SQUARE OUTDOOR ART EXHIBIT—The semiannual show will be on view Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 17-18, from noon until sundown.

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

EAST SIDE

PUBLIC THEATRE, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171; theatre opens in the late afternoon and is closed Mondays.)

"Doc's Kingdom" (1987; directed by Robert Kramer), with Paul McIsaac and Vincent Gallo.

MOVIELAND 8TH STREET TRIPLEX, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)

Theatre 1: "Die Hard" (†).

Theatre 2: Through Sept. 15: "Clean and Sober" (Glenn Gordon Caron), with Michael Keaton and Kathy Baker. From Sept. 16: "The Beast" (Kevin Reynolds), with George Dzunda, Jason Patric, and Steven Bauer.

Theatre 3: "Betrayed" (Costa-Gavras), with Debra Winger and Tom Berenger.

GRAMERCY, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)

"Who Framed Roger Rabbit" (†).

BAY CINEMA, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)

"Moon Over Parador" (†).

LOEWS 34TH STREET SHOWPLACE, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)

Theatre 1: "Married to the Mob" (†).

Theatre 2: "A Fish Called Wanda" (†).

Theatre 3: "Tucker: The Man and His Dream" (†).

34TH ST. EAST, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)

"Crossing Delancey" (Joan Micklin Silver), with Amy Irving and Peter Riegert.

EASTSIDE CINEMA, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)

Through Sept. 15: "Stealing Home" (Steven Kampmann and Will Aldis), with Mark Harmon.

From Sept. 16: "Dear America: Letters Home from Vietnam" (Bill Couturie), a documentary.

SUTTON, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)

"The Deceivers" (Nicholas Meyer), with Pierce Brosnan.

GOTHAM CINEMA, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)

"Big" (†).

PLAZA, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)

"Crossing Delancey" (Joan Micklin Silver), with Amy Irving and Peter Riegert.

MANHATTAN TWIN, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)

Theatre 1: "Midnight Run" (†).

Theatre 2: Through Sept. 15: "Who Framed Roger Rabbit" (†). From Sept. 16: "The Beast" (Kevin Reynolds), with George Dzunda, Jason Patric, and Steven Bauer.

D. W. GRIFFITH, 235 E. 59th. (759-4630)

"Track 29" (Nicolas Roeg), with Theresa Russell and Gary Oldman.

BARONET AND CORONET, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)

Theatre 1: "Die Hard" (†).

Theatre 2: "Running on Empty" (†).

CINEMA I AND II, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022/0774)

Theatre 1: Theatre closed.

Theatre 2: "Tucker: The Man and His Dream" (†).

GEMINI I AND 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)

Theatre 1: "Pascali's Island" (James Dearden), with Ben Kingsley, Charles Dance, and Helen Mirren.

Theatre 2: "Betrayed" (Costa-Gavras), with Debra Winger and Tom Berenger.

BECKMAN, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)

"Moon Over Parador" (†).

LOEWS NEW YORK TWIN, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)

Theatre 1: "Married to the Mob" (†).

Theatre 2: "A Fish Called Wanda" (†).

68TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)

Through Sept. 15: "Mr. North" (Danny Huston), with Anthony Edwards.

From Sept. 16: "The Prince of Pennsylvania" (Ron Nyswaner), with Fred Ward, Keanu Reeves, Bonnie Bedelia, and Amy Madigan.

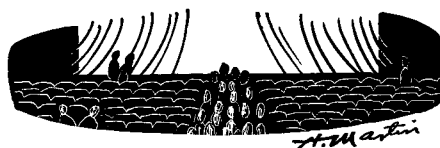
LOEWS TOWER EAST, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)

"Eight Men Out" (John Sayles).

U. A. EAST, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)

Through Sept. 15: "Stealing Home" (Steven Kampmann and Will Aldis), with Mark Harmon.

From Sept. 16: "Messenger of Death" (J. Lee Thompson), with Charles Bronson.



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FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 18.

LOEWS ORPHEUM I AND 2, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (289-4607)

Theatre 1: "A Nightmare on Elm Street 4: The Dream Master" (Renny Harlin), with Robert Englund.

Theatre 2: "Coming to America" (John Landis), with Eddie Murphy.

86TH STREET EAST TWIN, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)

Theatre 1: "Die Hard" (†).

Theatre 2: "Betrayed" (Costa-Gavras), with Debra Winger and Tom Berenger.

WEST SIDE

FILM FORUM I AND 2, 57 Watts St. (431-1590; Mondays through Fridays, theatres open in the late afternoon.)

Theatre 1: Through Sept. 13: "The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat" (1987; directed by Christopher Rawlence). From Sept. 14: "The Love Child" (1987; Robert Smith).

Theatre 2: See listings under "Revival Houses."

BLEECKER ST. CINEMA I AND 2, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560)

Theatre 1: Through Sept. 15: "Bull Durham" (†). From Sept. 16: "Bandits" (Claude Lelouch; in French).

Theatre 2: Through Sept. 15: "The Beer Drinker's Guide to Fitness and Filmmaking" (Fred G. Sullivan). From Sept. 16: "Bull Durham" (†).

WAYERLY I AND 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)

Theatre 1: "Crossing Delancey" (Joan Micklin Silver), with Amy Irving and Peter Riegert.

Theatre 2: "Big" (†).

8TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515; Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)

"Running on Empty" (†).

ART GREENWICH TWIN, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)

Theatre 1: "Moon Over Parador" (†).

Theatre 2: "Midnight Run" (†).

QUAD CINEMA, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)

Theatre 1: Through Sept. 15: "The Wash" (Michael Toshiyuki Uno). From Sept. 16: "Babette's Feast" (†).

Theatre 2: "Track 29" (Nicolas Roeg), with Theresa Russell and Gary Oldman.

Theatre 3: "The Deceivers" (Nicholas Meyer), with Pierce Brosnan.

Theatre 4: "A World Apart" (†).

23RD ST. WEST TRIPLEX, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)

Theatre 1: Through Sept. 15: "A Nightmare on Elm Street 4: The Dream Master" (Renny Harlin), with Robert Englund. From Sept. 16: To be announced.

Theatre 2: Through Sept. 15: "Midnight Run" (†). From Sept. 16: To be announced.

Theatre 3: Through Sept. 15: "Stealing Home" (Steven Kampmann and Will Aldis), with Mark Harmon. From Sept. 16: To be announced.

GUILD, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)

"Eight Men Out" (John Sayles).

ZIEGFELD, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)

"The Last Temptation of Christ" (†).

FESTIVAL, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)

"Pascali's Island" (James Dearden), with Ben Kingsley, Charles Dance, and Helen Mirren.

57TH ST. PLAYHOUSE, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)

"The Wizard of Loneliness" (Jenny Bowen), with Lukas Haas.

CARNEGIE HALL CINEMA, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)

"Moon Over Parador" (†).

CARNEGIE SCREENING ROOM, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)

Through Sept. 15: "Au Revoir les Enfants" ("Goodbye, Children") (†).

From Sept. 16: "Bandits" (Claude Lelouch; in French).

PARIS, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)

Through Sept. 15: "Bandits" (Claude Lelouch; in French).

From Sept. 16: "Miles from Home" (Gary Sinise), with Richard Gere and Kevin Anderson.

CINEMA 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)

Through Sept. 15: "Clean and Sober" (Glenn Gordon Caron), with Michael Keaton and Kathy Baker.

From Sept. 16: To be announced.

LOEWS PARAMOUNT, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)

"Eight Men Out" (John Sayles).

LINCOLN PLAZA I, 2, AND 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)

Theatre 1: "The Thin Blue Line" (†).

Theatre 2: "Bagdad Café" (†).

Theatre 3: "Boyfriends and Girlfriends" ("L'Ami de Mon Amie") (†).

CINEMA STUDIO I AND 2, B'way at 66th. (877-4040)

Theatre 1: Through Sept. 15: "Babette's Feast" (†). From Sept. 16: "Matador" (†).

Theatre 2: "Wings of Desire" ("Der Himmel über Berlin") (†).

REGENCY, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)

Through Sept. 15: "Rocket Gibraltar" (Daniel Petrie), with Burt Lancaster.

From Sept. 16: "The Beast" (Kevin Reynolds), with George Dzunda, Jason Patric, and Steven Bauer.

LOEWS 84TH STREET SIXPLEX, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)

Theatre 1: "Betrayed" (Costa-Gavras), with Debra Winger and Tom Berenger.

Theatre 2: "A Fish Called Wanda" (†).

Theatre 3: "Crossing Delancey" (Joan Micklin Silver), with Amy Irving and Peter Riegert.

Theatre 4: "Tucker: The Man and His Dream" (†).

Theatre 5: "A Nightmare on Elm Street 4: The Dream Master" (Renny Harlin), with Robert Englund.

Theatre 6: "Married to the Mob" (†).

METRO CINEMA I AND 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)

Theatre 1: Through Sept. 15: "Die Hard" (†).

From Sept. 16: To be announced.

Theatre 2: "Moon Over Parador" (†).

OLYMPIA I AND II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)

Theatre 1: "Midnight Run" (†).

Theatre 2: "Running on Empty" (†).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

CRITERION CENTER, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)

Theatre 1: "Coming to America" (directed by John Landis), with Eddie Murphy.

Theatre 2: "Young Guns" (Christopher Cain), with Emilio Estevez.

Theatre 3: Through Sept. 15: "The Blob" (Chuck Russell), with Kevin Dillon and Shawnee Smith. From Sept. 16: "Messenger of Death" (J. Lee Thompson), with Charles Bronson.

Theatre 4: Through Sept. 15: "Defense Play" (†). From Sept. 16: "A Nightmare on Elm Street 4: The Dream Master" (Renny Harlin), with Robert Englund.

Theatre 5: "Die Hard" (†).

Theatre 6: "Hero and the Terror" (William Tannen), with Chuck Norris.

EMBASSY I, B'way at 46th. (757-2408)

"Betrayed" (Costa-Gavras), with Debra Winger and Tom Berenger.

EMBASSY 2, 3, AND 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)

Theatre 2: "Married to the Mob" (†).

Theatre 3: "Who Framed Roger Rabbit" (†).

Theatre 4: "The Deceivers" (Nicholas Meyer), with Pierce Brosnan.

LOEWS ASTOR PLAZA, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)

Through Sept. 15: "A Nightmare on Elm Street 4: The Dream Master" (Renny Harlin), with Robert Englund.

From Sept. 16: To be announced.

MOVIELAND, B'way at 47th. (757-8320)

Through Sept. 15: "Stealing Home" (Steven Kampmann and Will Aldis), with Mark Harmon.

From Sept. 16: To be announced.

NATIONAL TWIN, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)

Theatre 1: "Running on Empty" (†).

Theatre 2: "Midnight Run" (†).

WARNER, 7th Ave. between 42nd and 43rd. (764-6760)

"Killer Clowns."

REVIVAL HOUSES

BIOGRAPH CINEMA, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)

Through Sept. 13: "Bringing Up Baby" (1938; directed by Howard Hawks), with Katharine Hepburn, Cary Grant, and Charles Ruggles; and "Holiday" (1938; George Cukor), with Katharine Hepburn, Cary Grant, Lew Ayres, Edward Everett Horton, and Doris Nolan.

Sept. 14-15: "The Lady Eve" (1941; Preston Sturges), with Barbara Stanwyck, Henry Fonda, and Charles Coburn; and "Hail the Conquering Hero" (1944; Preston Sturges), with Eddie Bracken and Ella Raines.

Sept. 16-17: "The Shop Around the Corner" (†) and "Ninotchka" (†).

Sept. 18-19: "Idiot's Delight" (1939; Clarence Brown), with Norma Shearer and Clark Gable; and "Private Lives" (†).

Sept. 20-21: "Mr. Deeds Goes to Town" (†) and "Too Many Husbands" (†).

CINEMA VILLAGE, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)

Through Sept. 13: "The Maltese Falcon" (1941; John Huston), with Mary Astor, Humphrey Bogart, Sydney Greenstreet, Elisha Cook, Jr., and Peter Lorre; and "Casablanca" (1942; Michael Curtiz), with Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman, and Claude Rains.

Sept. 14-15: "The Long Goodbye" (1973; Robert Altman), with Elliott Gould, Nina van Pallandt, Sterling Hayden, and Mark Rydell; and "Chinatown" (1974; Roman Polanski), with Jack Nicholson, Faye Dunaway, and John Huston.

Sept. 16-17: "Broadcast News" (1987; James L. Brooks), with William Hurt, Albert Brooks, and Holly Hunter; and "Sweet Smell of Success" (†).

Sept. 18: "Jules and Jim" (†); and "The 400 Blows" (1959; François Truffaut; in French), with Jean-Pierre Léaud.

Sept. 19-20: "Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia" (1974; Sam Peckinpah), with Warren Oates; and "Ride the High Country" (†).

From Sept. 21: "Angel Heart" (†); and "9½ Weeks" (1986; Adrian Lyne), with Mickey Rourke and Kim Basinger.

FILM FORUM 2, 57 Watts St. (431-1590; Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)

Through Sept. 13: "Mr. Sardonicus" (1961; William Castle), with Oscar Homolka; and "Homicidal" (1961; William Castle), with Glenn Corbett.

Sept. 14: "Chamber of Horrors" (1966; Hy Averback), with Cesare Danova and Wilfrid Hyde-White; and "Wicked, Wicked" (1973; Richard L. Bare), with David Bailey.

Sept. 15: "The Hypnotic Eye" (1961; George Blair), with Jacques Bergerac; and "A Date with Death" (1959; Harold Daniels).

Sept. 16-18: "House of Wax" (1953; André de Toth; in 3-D), with Phyllis Kirk, Vincent

Price, Carolyn Jones, and Paul Picerni; and "House on Haunted Hill" (1959; William Castle), with Vincent Price, Carol Ohmart, and Richard Long.

Sept. 19: "Polyester" (1981; John Waters), with Divine and Tab Hunter; and "Macabre" (1958; William Castle), with William Prince and Jim Backus.

Sept. 20: "Paradisio" (1962; in 3-D); and "The 4D Man" (1959; Irvin S. Yeaworth, Jr.), with Robert Lansing.

From Sept. 21: "The Maze" (1953; William Cameron Menzies; in 3-D), with Richard Carlson; and "The Mask" (1961; Julian Roffman), with Paul Stevens.

THALIA SoHo, 15 Vandam St. (675-0498)

Sept. 12: "Come and See" (1987; Elem Klimov).

Sept. 13: "Women in Love" (1970; Ken Russell), with Alan Bates, Oliver Reed, Glenda Jackson, and Jennie Linden; and "Crimes of Passion" (1984; Ken Russell), with Kathleen Turner and Anthony Perkins.

Sept. 14: "Judgment at Nuremberg" (1961; Stanley Kramer), with Spencer Tracy and Burt Lancaster; and "The Wannsee Conference" (1987; Heinz Schirk; in German).

Sept. 15: "Scandal Sheet" (1952; Phil Karlson), with Broderick Crawford and Donna Reed; and "Park Row" (1952; Samuel Fuller), with Gene Evans.

Sept. 16-17: "Full Metal Jacket" (1987; Stanley Kubrick), with Matthew Modine; and "Saint Jack" (†).

Sept. 18: "The Haunted Castle" (1921; F. W. Murnau; a German silent film); "Nosferatu" (1922; F. W. Murnau; a German silent film), with Max Schreck; and "Tabu" (†).

Sept. 19: "The Rise and Fall of Legs Diamond" (1960; Budd Boetticher), with Ray Danton; and "The Killer Is Loose" (1956; Budd Boetticher), with Joseph Cotten and Rhonda Fleming.

Sept. 20: "Murder, He Says" (†); and "Unfaithfully Yours" (1948; Preston Sturges), with Rex Harrison and Linda Darnell.

Sept. 21: "Hollywood Story" (1951; William Castle), with Richard Conte; and "Sunset Boulevard" (1950; Billy Wilder), with Gloria Swanson, William Holden, and Erich von Stroheim.

THEATRE 80 ST. MARKS, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

Sept. 12: "Los Olvidados" ("The Young and the Damned," 1950; Luis Buñuel; a Mexican film, in Spanish); and "Viridiana" (1961; Luis Buñuel; in Spanish), with Francisco Rabal and Silvia Pinal.

Sept. 13: "The Guardsman" (1931; Sidney Franklin), with Lynn Fontanne and Alfred Lunt; and "Idiot's Delight" (1939; Clarence Brown), with Norma Shearer and Clark Gable.

Sept. 14: "Cyrano de Bergerac" (1950; Michael Gordon), with José Ferrer, Mala Powers, and William Prince; and "Adventures of Don Juan" (1948; Vincent Sherman), with Errol Flynn and Viveca Lindfors.

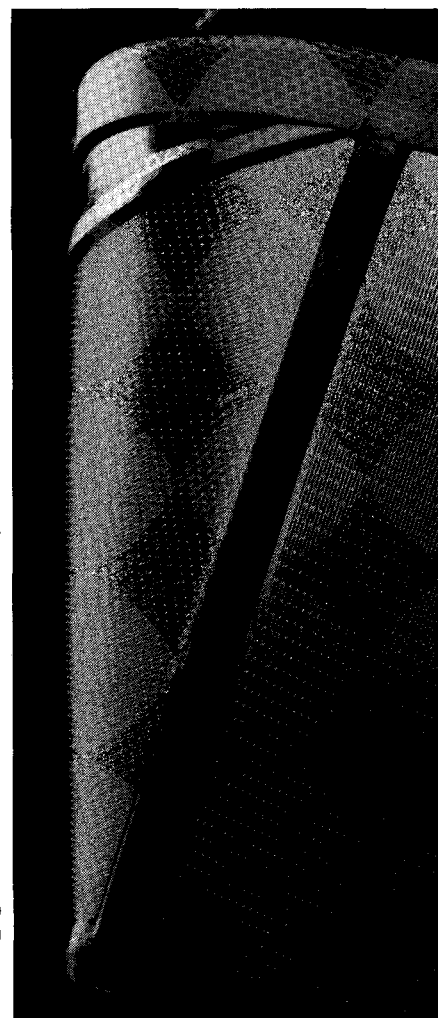
Sept. 15: "Rashomon" (†); and "Dodes'kaden" (1971; Akira Kurosawa; in Japanese).

Sept. 16-17: "The Blue Dahlia" (†); and "The Great Gatsby" (1949; Elliott Nugent), with Alan Ladd, Betty Field, Macdonald Carey, and Barry Sullivan.

Sept. 18: "Diabolique" (1955; Henri-Georges Clouzot; in French), with Simone Signoret, Vera Clouzot, and Paul Meurisse; and "Panique" (1946; Julien Duvivier; in French), with Michel Simon, Viviane Romance, and Paul Bernard.

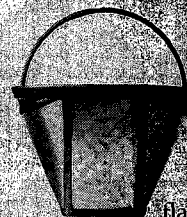
Sept. 19: "Les Visiteurs du Soir" (†); and "La Ronde" (1950; Max Ophüls; in French), with Gérard Philipe, Danielle Darrieux, Simone Signoret, and Jean-Louis Barrault.

Sept. 20: "Scarlet Street" (1946; Fritz Lang), with Joan Bennett, Edward G. Robinson,



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MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

and Dan Duryea; and "Man Hunt" (1941; Fritz Lang), with Joan Bennett, Walter Pidgeon, George Sanders, and John Carradine. Sept. 21: "Ride the High Country" (†) and "Junior Bonner" (†).

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490; a limited number of tickets are available to those applying for them in person at the museum after 11 on the day of the showing.)

THEATRE 1: Sept. 12 at 2:30: "Fires Were Started" (1943; directed by Humphrey Jennings). . . . Sept. 12 at 6: "The Bells Go Down" (1943; Basil Dearden), with James Mason, Mervyn Johns, and Tommy Trinder. . . . Sept. 13 at 2:30: "The Common Touch" (1941; John Baxter), with Geoffrey Hibbert, Raymond Lovell, and Greta Gynt. . . . Sept. 13 at 6: "For Freedom" (1940; Maurice Elvey and Castleton Knight), with Will Fyffe and Anthony Hulme. . . . Sept. 15 at 2:30: "Love on the Dole" (1941; John Baxter), with Deborah Kerr, Clifford Evans, and Joyce Howard. . . . Sept. 15 at 6: "The Shipbuilders" (1943; John Baxter), with Clive Brook, Geoffrey Hibbert, and Morland Graham. . . . Sept. 16 at 2:30: "The Way Ahead" (1944; Carol Reed), with David Niven, Billy Hartnell, and Stanley Holloway. . . . Sept. 16 at 6: "Tawny Pipit" (1944; Bernard Miles and Charles Saunders), with Rosamund John, Niall MacGinnis, and Bernard Miles. . . . Sept. 17 at 1: "San Demetrio, London" (1943; Charles Frenn), with Walter Fitzgerald, Mervyn Johns, and Robert Beatty. . . . Sept. 17 at 3: "Tawny Pipit." . . . Sept. 17 at 5: "Pastor Hall" (1940; Roy Boulting), with Wilfrid Lawson, Bernard

Miles, and Nova Pilbeam. . . . Sept. 18 at 1: "Underground" (1928; Anthony Asquith; a silent film), with Elissa Landi and Brian Aherne. . . . Sept. 18 at 3: "We Dive at Dawn" (1943; Anthony Asquith), with Eric Portman, John Mills, and Niall MacGinnis. . . . Sept. 18 at 5: "The Way Ahead." . . . Sept. 19 at 2:30: "Pastor Hall." . . . Sept. 19 at 6: "Underground." . . . Sept. 20 at 2:30: "We Dive at Dawn." . . . Sept. 20 at 6: "The Gentle Sex" (1943; Leslie Howard and Maurice Elvey), with Jean Gillie, Joan Greenwood, and Joyce Howard.

THEATRE 2: Theatre closed.

MUSEUM OF BROADCASTING, 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—Through Oct. 6: "Woody Allen: The Television Work," featuring "The Kraft Music Hall: Woody Allen Looks at 1967" and a compilation of performances by and conversations with Allen from 1962 to 1977. Showings Tuesdays through Saturdays at 12:05, 1:45, and 3:30. . . . Sept. 13 at 5:30: "Bell Telephone Hour: The Music of Cole Porter" (1964), with Ethel Merman, John Raitt, and others.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—This new museum, devoted to the art, history, and technology of film, television, and video, has mounted a permanent exhibition called "Behind the Screen: Producing, Promoting, and Exhibiting Motion Pictures and Television," which includes "Tut's Fever," an installation by Red Grooms and Lysiane Luong. (Museum hours: Wednesdays and Thursdays, 1 to 5; Fridays, 1 to 8; Saturdays, 10 to 8; and Sundays, 10 to 5.)

RIKLIS THEATRE: Sept. 14 at 2:30: "The Wizard of Oz" (1939; Victor Fleming), with Judy Garland, Frank Morgan, Ray Bolger, Jack Haley, and Bert Lahr. . . . Sept. 15 at 2:30: "Singin' in the Rain" (1952; Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen), with Kelly,

Debbie Reynolds, and Donald O'Connor. . . . Sept. 16 at 2:30: "Jet Pilot" (1957; Josef von Sternberg), with John Wayne and Janet Leigh. . . . Sept. 16 at 7:30: "Reap the Wild Wind" (1942; Cecil B. De Mille), with Ray Milland, Paulette Goddard, and John Wayne. . . . Sept. 17 at 12:30: "Dr. X" (1932; Michael Curtiz), with Lee Tracy, Lionel Atwill, Preston Foster, and Fay Wray. . . . Sept. 17 at 3: "Blood and Sand" (1941; Rouben Mamoulian), with Tyrone Power, Linda Darnell, and Rita Hayworth. . . . Sept. 17 at 7:30: "Vertigo" (1958; Alfred Hitchcock), with James Stewart and Kim Novak. . . . Sept. 18 at 12:30: "The Eddie Duchin Story" (1956; George Sidney), with Tyrone Power and Kim Novak. . . . Sept. 18 at 3: "Margie" (1946; Henry King), with Jeanne Crain. . . . Sept. 21 at 2:30: "The Eddie Duchin Story."

WARNER COMMUNICATIONS SCREENING ROOM: A continuous showing of forty-six videotapes on the subject of the media and the Vietnam War.

COLLECTIVE FOR LIVING CINEMA, 41 White St. (925-2111)—Sept. 16-22: "Dolly, Lotte & Maria" (1988; Rosa von Praunheim), a documentary on the German artists Dolly Haas, Lotte Goslar, and Maria Piscator. Showings Friday at 8 (with Miss Haas, Mr. von Praunheim, and cinematographer Jeff Preiss present); Saturday at 8 (with Miss Piscator, Mr. von Praunheim, and Mr. Preiss present); Sunday at 8; and Monday through Thursday at 7.

ASIA SOCIETY, 725 Park Ave., at 70th St. (517-2742)—A program of films from Hong Kong, in Cantonese, with English and Chinese subtitles. Sept. 16 at 3: "Just Like Weather" (1986; Allen Fong). . . . Sept. 16 at 7: "Project A—II" (1988; Jackie Chan). . . . Sept. 17 at 3: "A Chinese Ghost Story" (1987; Ching Siu-tung). . . . Sept. 17 at 7: "Wonder Women" (1987; Kam Kwok Leung).

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.

IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(Unsigned notes are by Pauline Kael; others are by Penelope Gilliatt and Terrence Rafferty.)

ANGEL HEART (1987)—In this Alan Parker film, set in 1955, Mickey Rourke plays a private eye who is hired by a mysterious client (Robert De Niro) to search for information about a crooner of the prewar era who has disappeared. Every place Rourke goes is artfully arranged to be scuzzy, and *he's* scuzzy, although women don't seem to mind. He has a cajoling, intimate manner with Elizabeth Whitcraft as a ready-for-action blonde, with Charlotte Rampling as a sullen psychic, and, especially, with the sexpot Lisa Bonet as a teen-age Mambo priestess who has a penchant for smearing herself with chicken blood. This is a lavishly sombre piece of hokum—funereal and loony. Parker wrote the screenplay, based on William Hjortsberg's "Falling Angel." Cinematography by Michael Seresin; music by Trevor Jones. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/6/87.) (Cinema Village; starting Sept. 21.)

AU REVOIR LES ENFANTS ("Goodbye, Children")—It's set in Occupied France in 1944, when the writer-director Louis Malle was an eleven-year-old at a Catholic boys' boarding school near Fontainebleau that sheltered several Jewish boys. The Gestapo learned they were there, and sent the ones they found to Auschwitz, and the headmaster to a work camp. One of the Jewish boys was in Malle's class, but Malle didn't get to know him well and didn't realize that he was Jewish. For the dramatic purposes of the movie, he has conceived a close friendship between his alter ego, the fair-haired Julien Quentin (Gaspard Manesse), and the dark boy who is using the false name Jean Bonnet (Raphaël Fejtő). But nothing comes into clear focus—not the boys' attitudes, not even the images. The film (especially the first half) seems padded, formal, discreet. It's like watching a faded French classic. And there's something unseemly about the way Jean is used as an aesthetic object—spiritual, sensitive, exotic. With Francine Racette as Julien's mother and François Néret as the informer. In French. (2/22/88) (Carnegie Screening Room; through Sept. 15.)

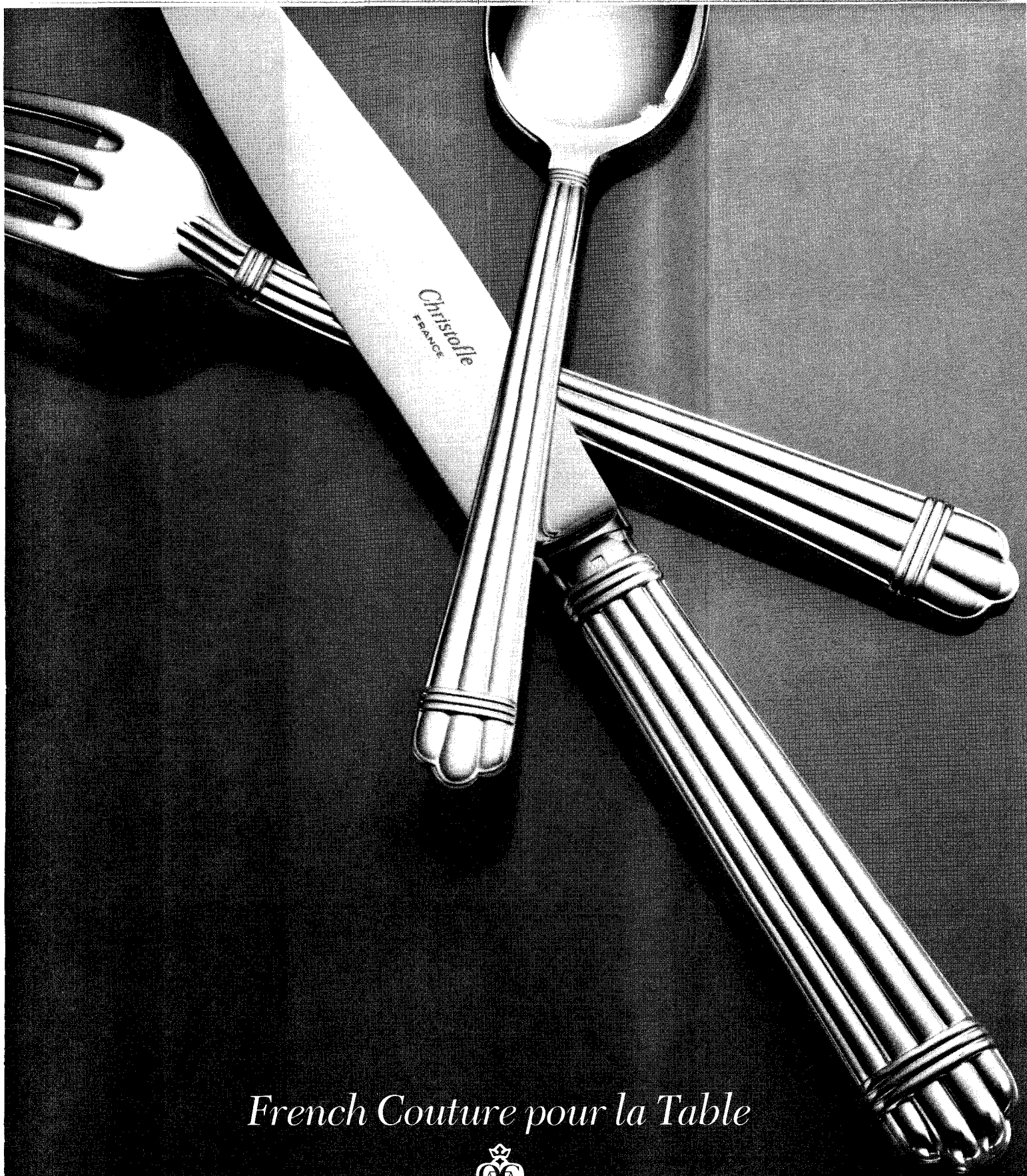
BABETTE'S FEAST—In a village on Denmark's gray, blustery Jutland peninsula, sometime in the eighteen-eighties, Babette (Stéphane Audran), the French servant of a pair of elderly unmarried sisters (Birgitte Federspiel and Bodil Kjer), prepares a special dinner for her employers and their guests—a lavish, one-time-only orgy of haute cuisine served to a group of devout Lutherans who are used to receiving the Lord's bounty in the form of grim little slabs of boiled fish. Adapting one of Isak Dinesen's "Anecdotes of Destiny," Gabriel Axel, the writer-director, tells this simple tale simply. He establishes a lulling, bedtime-story tone right from the start, perhaps too successfully: our eyelids begin to seem very heavy after twenty minutes or so. The whole thing turns out to be about the consolations of art, and the union of "righteousness and bliss." The film is more righteous than blissful: a more austere celebration of the pleasures of the senses would be difficult to imagine. In Danish and French. —T.R. (Cinema Studio; through Sept. 15. . . . Sept. 16 at 2:30: "The Wizard of Oz" (1939; Victor Fleming), with Judy Garland, Frank Morgan, Ray Bolger, Jack Haley, and Bert Lahr. . . . Sept. 15 at 2:30: "Singin' in the Rain" (1952; Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen), with Kelly,

BAGDAD CAFÉ—After an argument with her husband on a godforsaken stretch of highway at the edge of the Mojave Desert, a fat German tourist named Jasmin (Marianne Sägebrecht) checks into a crummy motel attached to the equally crummy Bagdad Café. This movie, the first in English by the German director Percy Adlon (whose 1985 "Sugarbaby" was also a vehicle for Sägebrecht), is filled with eccentrics who are apparently meant to be lovable. The rather precious conceit of the film is that Jasmin somehow brings the outcast characters together in a kind of extended family; by the end, the Bagdad Café has been transformed into a popular roadside cabaret, with everyone contributing a specialty (Jasmin does magic tricks). The American performers are trapped in a movie that treats them as merely exotic—waxwork grotesques waiting to be animated by a mysterious German touch. Eleonore Adlon and Christopher Doherty collaborated with the director on the screenplay. With CCH Pounder, Jack Palance, and Christine Kaufmann. —T.R. (Lincoln Plaza.)

Big—A formula fantasy film that has been directed very gently and tactfully by Penny Marshall; she sleepwalks you through the script (by Gary Ross and Anne Spielberg) about a twelve-year-old boy who wishes he were big and is magically given the body of a man in his thirties—Tom Hanks. There are neat, flaky moments, but everything has a tepid inevitability, and even as you smile you may be groaning inwardly, because "Big" is dedicated to awakening the child in all of us. Of course, the Hanks character isn't ready to function as an adult; he wants to go back. The movie wants to go back, too. It's nostalgic for childhood, for suburbia, for innocent fun. (It isn't about kids wanting to be big; it's about grownups feeling little.) In its wholesome way, "Big" is selling the slick wonders of immaturity. With the slyly sexy Elizabeth Perkins, and good comic work by Robert Loggia and Jared Rushton. Also with John Heard, David Moscow, Jon Lovitz, and Mercedes Ruehl. (6/27/88) (Gotham Cinema, and Waverly.)

THE BLUE DAHLIA (1946)—The director, George Marshall, doesn't provide a tense atmosphere or a hardboiled pace, and though the screenplay is by Raymond Chandler, the picture just drags along. The plot involves Alan Ladd as a Navy flier whose adulterous wife (Doris Dowling) is murdered; a night-club proprietor (Howard Da Silva) whose own estranged wife (Veronica Lake) is attracted to the flier; and the flier's psychoneurotic buddy (William Bendix), who can never remember just what he's been up to. There are also voyeurs, blackmailers, baffled cops, and mugs in the pay of the night-club proprietor. Ladd takes many a mauling before he gathers the heroine (Lake) in his arms. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 16-17.)

BOYFRIENDS AND GIRLFRIENDS ("L'Ami de Mon Amie")—The sixth, and last, in Eric Rohmer's series of "Comedies and Proverbs" is a light romantic comedy set in Cergy-Pontoise, an overdesigned and self-contained modern suburb of Paris. In this bourgeois Forest of Arden, four completely unremarkable young people—two women, two men—reshuffle their affections so that each winds up with the "right" partner in the end. It's essentially



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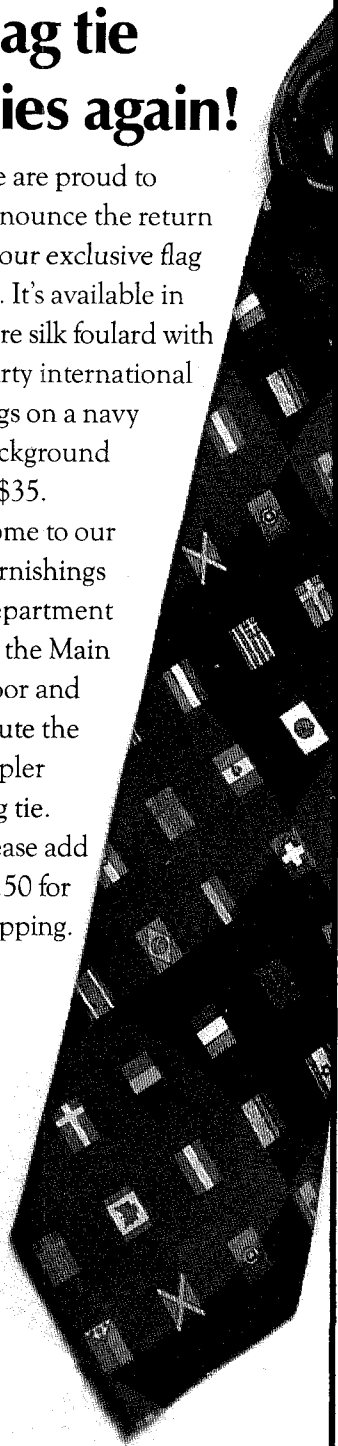
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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

IN BRIEF—Cont'd

the same leisurely comedy of self-knowledge that Rohmer has been making for nearly twenty years, but this time he treats his themes with a frivolous, casual air. He takes pleasure in the cleanness and brightness of this world, in the contented buzz of shoppers and office workers and Sunday picnickers, in the forthright way his characters pursue their comforts. "Boyfriends and Girlfriends" is fluff: it's artificial without being oppressive—a graceful, friendly abstraction. With Emmanuelle Chaulet, Sophie Renoir, François-Eric Gendron, and Eric Viellard. In French.—T.R. (7/25/88) (Lincoln Plaza.)

BULL DURHAM—Written and directed by Ron Shelton, this sunny romantic comedy has the kind of dizzying off-center literacy that Preston Sturges' pictures had. It's a satirical celebration of our native jauntiness and wit; it takes us into a subculture that's like a bawdy adjunct of childhood—minor-league baseball. Kevin Costner plays the smart, hyper-articulate catcher Crash, and comes through with his first wide-awake, star performance; at his best, he's as berserkly ironic as Jack Nicholson is at some of his peaks. After playing for twelve years, Crash arrives in Durham, North Carolina, to join the Durham Bulls and learns that he's been brought in to train baby-faced Nuke (Tim Robbins), a wild young rookie pitcher who is destined to move up. Susan Sarandon plays the beautiful, passionate Annie Savoy, a baseball fanatic who has her own scorecard: "There's never been a ballplayer slept with me who didn't have the best year of his career." What you keep reacting to is the film's exuberant doodles. (6/27/88) (Bleecker St. Cinema.)

DIE HARD—A formula action picture, but with the extra-potency formula. It has the sweatiest hero, the most sinister bad guys (with the thickest foreign accents), the silliest plot twists, the loudest explosions, the most gratuitous bursts of machine-gun fire—all in 70 mm. and bowel-rumbling Dolby sound. Bruce Willis plays John McClane, a New York cop battling a group of European terrorists who are holding his wife (Bonnie Bedelia) and her co-workers hostage on the thirtieth floor of a gleaming L.A. skyscraper (actually the Fox Plaza in Century City). The action is so grandiose and relentless that it's funny. The director, John McTiernan, has the right style for this sort of cheerfully stupid, super-kinetic comic-book violence. The problem with "Die Hard" isn't so much the physical overkill of the production as the emotional overkill of the script (by Jeb Stuart and Steven E. de Souza, from a novel by Roderick Thorp). By the end, there has been so much onscreen applause for McClane that the picture's "humanity" seems narcissistic and fake, like Oscar-night sentimentality. Also with Alan Rickman, who gives the character of the terrorists' leader a wonderful slimy elegance.—T.R. (8/8/88) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Baronet, 86th Street East Twin, and Criterion Center. . . Metro Cinema; through Sept. 15.)

A FISH CALLED WANDA—This caper comedy promises to embody the best of two different styles of British humor: its director, the seventy-seven-year-old Charles Crichton, made "The Lavender Hill Mob," one of the greatest of the Ealing comedies, and its writer, executive producer, and star, the towering John Cleese, was a member of the Monty Python group and the creator of the hilarious television series "Fawlty Towers." Its main characters are a very proper London barrister (Cleese) and three jewel thieves: a crafty, sexy American woman named Wanda (Jamie Lee Curtis); another American, Otto (Kevin Kline), who's violently Anglophobic and dumb as dirt; and Ken (the ex-Pythonite Michael Palin), a deranged stutterer who's perfectly happy to bump off old ladies but becomes inconsolable at the death of a small dog or a tropical fish. The movie has a fair number of laughs, but Crichton's direction is too drab and poky for the material. Every time "Wanda" threatens to take off into the realm of insane, head-splitting farce, as "Fawlty Towers" so often did, something seems to drag it down—some impulse toward stability and restraint, at odds with the script's spirit of manic invention.—T.R. (7/25/88) (Loews 34th Street Showplace,

Loews New York Twin, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

JULES AND JIM (1962)—François Truffaut's celebration of bohemian life in France and Germany in the years of artistic ferment between the First World War and the Second. The Austrian, Jules (Oskar Werner), and the Frenchman, Jim (Henri Serre), have a peaceful friendship. But when they are with Catherine (Jeanne Moreau) they feel alive; anything may happen. She's the catalyst, the troublemaker, the source of despair as well as the source of joy, an enchantress. Catherine marries Jules, who can't hold her, and, in despair, he encourages Jim's interest in her—"that way, she'll still be *ours*." She insists on her freedom to leave men, but if they leave her (as Jim does) she is as devastated and as helpless as any clinging vine (perhaps *more* devastated—she can't even ask for sympathy). Elliptical, full of wit and radiance, this is the best movie ever made about what most of us think of as the Scott Fitzgerald period. In French. (Cinema Village; Sept. 18.)

JUNIOR BONNER (1972)—Sam Peckinpah's affectionate piece about the dead-and-gone past of rodeos, with very fine performances by Robert Preston as an aging roisterer of a father, Ida Lupino as a practical mother with a voice like a nutmeg grater and too much wisdom for her own comfort, and Steve McQueen as a roaming rodeo performer too young to be already so tarnished with disappointment but too old to be as easy a rider as he used to be.—P.G. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 21.)

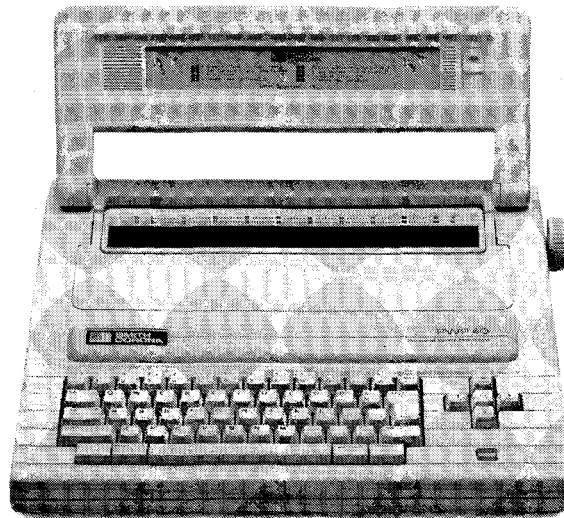
THE LAST TEMPTATION OF CHRIST—Martin Scorsese's film is based on an intense, rather ponderous novel by Nikos Kazantzakis that portrays Christ as a tormented prophet who has to choose between his human nature and his divine nature—who in order to fulfill his role as redeemer must reject the overpowering temptation to be merely a man. If we respond to anything in this movie it's to the idea of Scorsese wrestling with Kazantzakis's conception, thrashing manfully among the tangles of the novel's dense prose, trying to isolate some clear, intelligible meaning from this religious fever-dream. The director's work here has extraordinary integrity, a kind of spiritual rigor. But, despite some brilliant sequences, the movie fails. Scorsese is too reverent toward the novel, which is more than difficult—it's impossible. He hasn't managed to come up with a consistent visual style for the story, and the movie's intensity, over a span of two hours and forty minutes, is sputtering, fitful. The scenes meant to evoke the natural—the human—side of the story don't have much charge, and most of the actors look uncomfortable. (The drab modern idiom of Paul Schrader's dialogue is at least part of the problem.) The idea of Jesus agonizing over whether he would rather be human or divine is compelling enough, but its relevance is limited: this isn't a problem any of us will ever have. This movie isn't a sacrilege; it's just an honorable mistake. With Willem Dafoe as Jesus, Harvey Keitel as Judas, Barbara Hershey as Mary Magdalene, and David Bowie as Pontius Pilate. Cinematography by Michael Ballhaus. Peter Gabriel composed the music.—T.R. (9/5/88) (Ziegfeld.)

MARRIED TO THE MOB—Angela (Michelle Pfeiffer), the heroine of Jonathan Demme's crazy comedy, is married to an up-and-coming suburban gangster known as Frank the Cucumber (Alec Baldwin), and she doesn't feel good about her life; she's avid for ordinariness. When Frank is murdered by his boss, Tony the Tiger (Dean Stockwell), Angela gives away virtually the entire contents of her Long Island house and moves herself and her reluctant son into a cramped Lower East Side apartment, hoping that the mob will forget about her. Unfortunately, Tony the Tiger has the hots for her, the F.B.I. is tailing her, and Tony's insanely jealous wife, Connie (Mercedes Ruehl), is on the warpath. Pfeiffer's extraordinary performance is the movie's major pleasure; she makes both Angela's toughness and her goodness believable, funny, and touching. As usual, Demme is great at providing incidental pleasures, including a terrific score (with original music by David Byrne) and a superbly eccentric cast that features Matthew Modine, Trey Wilson, Joan Cusack, Tracey Walter, and

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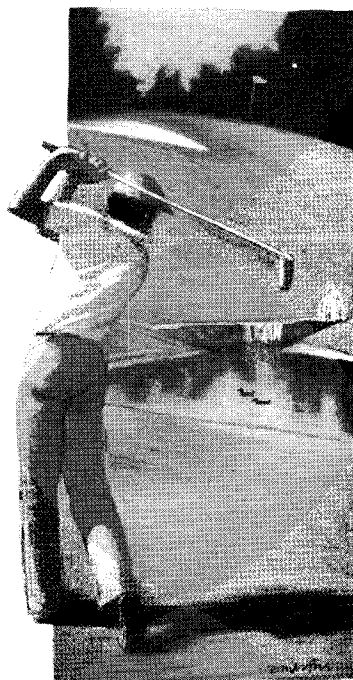
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David Johansen (as a priest). The vibrant cinematography is by Tak Fujimoto.—T.R. (8/22/88) (Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews New York Twin, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy.)

MATADOR—One of the most original and entertaining of the new films from abroad. Directed by Pedro Almodóvar in 1986 (just before he made the 1987 "Law of Desire"), this comedy is all lush, clownish excess. Everything is eroticized—the colors, the violence. The opening (horrible, slasher images on a VCR—crimes against women—that a retired, gored bullfighter masturbates to) stuns you for a few seconds before it makes you laugh. The characters in this movie act out their wildest fantasies—or, like the handsome, wealthy young virgin Ángel (Antonio Banderas), try to act them out—and embarrass themselves. Ángel is training to be a bullfighter, but he faints at the sight of blood. He's such a supreme fantasist that he hallucinates and sees what happened in a recent series of murders. Unluckily, he's fantasist enough to think that he committed them. It's all sumptuously sick and funny, with hair ornaments used as daggers, tall women in swirling cloaks, and love rites performed on the matador's hot-pink cape spread fanlike on the floor. This trashiness has its own poetry and bravura. Assumpta Serna plays a culmination of the scarlet-woman tradition of Joan Crawford, Rita Hayworth, Ava Gardner, and Anouk Aimée—all those flaming man-killers with their too vibrant smiles. And Almodóvar himself appears as a mad-genius couturier who messes up his curly hair before he appears in public. Also with Nacho Martínez as the matador, Eusebio Poncela as the police inspector, Carmen Maura as the psychiatrist, and Eva Cobo, Julieta Serrano, and Chus Lampreave. Written by the director and Jesús Ferrero; cinematography by Ángel Luis Fernández. In Spanish. (5/16/88) (Cinema Studio; starting Sept. 16.)

MIDNIGHT RUN—At first, Martin Brest's new film is content to be a pleasantly flaky buddy movie and to lean on the talents of its two stars, Robert De Niro and Charles Grodin. De Niro's Jack Walsh, an ex-cop who works for a weaselly L.A. bail bondsman (Joe Pantoliano), goes to New York to retrieve a white-collar crook named Jonathan Mardukas (Grodin), an accountant who upon learning that the corporation he worked for was an organized-crime front embezzled fifteen million dollars and gave almost all of it to charity. They travel across the country in a succession of vehicles, dodging federal agents, hit men, and a profoundly stupid rival bounty hunter (John Ashton). De Niro gets marvelous effects by seeming to be constantly suppressing anger and powerful physical energy. Grodin, a minimalist and a miniaturist, does all his acting with sneaky looks and minute variations in the tone of his flat, dull voice, and he creates a memorable comic character—a placid solid-citizen type who's much wilier and crazier than he appears to be. The two actors look as if they were genuinely enjoying each other. But as they get close to L.A. Brest starts pumping up his sweetly funny road movie with large-scale action scenes—it's as if he were afraid that a pair of superlative actors doing low-key character comedy wouldn't be enough entertainment for us. Also with Yaphet Kotto, Dennis Farina, Richard Foronjy, and Robert Miranda. Screenplay by George Gallo.—T.R. (8/8/88) (Manhattan Twin, Art Greenwich Twin, Olympia, and National Twin... ¶ 23rd St. West Triplex; through Sept. 15.)

MR. DEEDS GOES TO TOWN (1936)—Frank Capra-style folk humor is better in slightly shorter doses (this runs almost two hours), but there's no use fighting one's enjoyment of his homey fantasy demonstrating the triumph of small-town values over big-city cynicism. Gary Cooper (Longfellow Deeds) is the sincere greeting-card poet from New England who comes to New York; Jean Arthur is the wiseacre newspaperwoman who starts out by making a public joke of him and then falls in love with him. Robert Riskin adapted the Clarence Budington Kelland *SatEvePost* story "Opera Hat." The cast includes George Bancroft, Lionel Stander, and Douglass Dumbrille. (Biograph Cinema; Sept. 20-21.)

MOON OVER PARADOR—With Richard Dreyfuss, Raul Julia, and Sonia Braga; directed by Paul Mazursky. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Bay Cinema, Beekman, Art Greenwich Twin, Carnegie Hall Cinema, and Metro Cinema.)

MURDER, HE SAYS (1945)—In the same native cornball-surreal black-comedy mode as "Arsenic and Old Lace" but much looser, sillier, funnier. Fred MacMurray is the insurance agent who stumbles into the house of a family of homicidal hillbillies; Mabel Paige is the unloved grandma, Marjorie Main is the yowling, whip-cracking mother, Porter Hall the mousy, meek father, and Peter Whitney the half-witted twin sons—one of whom suffers from a crick in his back. Mother's cooking features a poison that glows in the dark, and in the climactic sequence the assembled characters keep turning off the lights and spinning the lazy-Susan table to avoid the poison. (There has probably never been anything like this sequence in other farces; it's a classic of slapstick craziness.) The work of the director, George Marshall, is square at times; it isn't up to the madness and invention of Lou Breslow's screenplay (based on Jack Moffitt's story). With Helen Walker, Jean Heather, and Barbara Pepper. (Thalia SoHo; Sept. 20.)

NINOTCHKA (1939)—Garbo brings her incredible sensual abandon to the role of a glum, scientifically trained Bolshevik envoy who succumbs to Parisian freedom—i.e., champagne. The film includes a historic encounter, when the great instinctual artist of the screen meets the great stylist and technician of the stage—Ina Claire, as a Russian grand duchess. The fur flies exquisitely. Directed by Ernst Lubitsch, this light, satirical comedy has the nonchalance and the sophistication that were his trademark—but it also reveals that this time the trade marked him too high. There's an obviousness here; we can feel that we're being played down to. With Melvyn Douglas, Sig Rumann, Felix Bressart, Bela Lugosi, Alexander Granach, and George Tobias. (Biograph Cinema; Sept. 16-17.)

PRIVATE LIVES (1931)—Early talkie attempt at glittering theatrical sophistication, and somehow, in its own terms, it works. This M-G-M version of the Noël Coward play was made soon after the play came out, and perhaps the play's style and excitement carries the cast along. Norma Shearer isn't so bad, and Robert Montgomery is very, very good. Directed by Sidney Franklin. With Reginald Denny, Una Merkel, and, in a role added in the film, Jean Hersholt. (Biograph Cinema; Sept. 18-19.)

RASHOMON (1951)—In ninth-century Kyoto, a nobleman's bride is raped by a bandit; the nobleman is murdered, or possibly he is a suicide. This double crime is acted out four times, in the versions of the three participants (each giving an account that increases the prestige of his conduct) and in the version of a woodcutter who witnessed the episode. Continuously reconstructing the crime, this great, enigmatic film asks, How can we ever know the truth? The introductory and closing sequences are tedious; the woman's whimpering is almost enough to drive one to the nearest exit. Yet the film transcends these discomforts: it has its own perfection. Directed by Akira Kurosawa. With Machiko Kyo, Toshiro Mifune, Masayuki Mori, and Takashi Shimura. In Japanese. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 15.)

RIDE THE HIGH COUNTRY (1962)—A small (and humane) classic by Sam Peckinpah, and perhaps the most simple and traditional and graceful of all modern Westerns. That unpublishable fine actor Joel McCrea plays a former marshal who gets a job transporting gold; he signs up another former lawman, Randolph Scott, to help him. In the film's most astonishing and original sequence, the marriage of an innocent young girl (Mariette Hartley) takes place in a brothel in a mining camp, and the terrified bride realizes that the groom's brothers expect to share her; McCrea and Scott help her escape. In the film's most memorable single image, the old Westerner (McCrea) sinks to the bottom of the frame to die. The cinematography is by Lucien Ballard at his incomparable best. (Cinema Village; Sept. 19-20... ¶ Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 21.)

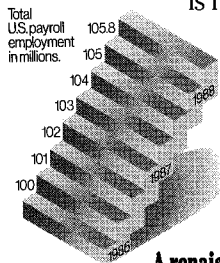
RUNNING ON EMPTY—With Christine Lahti, River Phoenix, Judd Hirsch, and Martha Plimpton; directed by Sidney Lumet. (Reviewed in this

With so many things to worry about why are we so optimistic?

Those inclined to worry will always find things in the economy to worry about. But the fact is, Merrill Lynch research shows that many untapped investment opportunities are unfolding. And we believe the time to take advantage of them has arrived. Here are those trends. And what the astute investor can do about them.

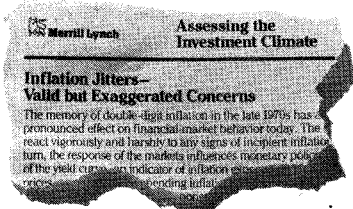
Economic forecast: Up, down, then up again.

The basic economy is sound. Personal income has been rising steadily for the last few years. The unemployment rate is near a 14-year low, and the gross national product is advancing at a healthy pace. While our research shows the possibility of a recession next year, it should be modest in length and degree. And economic growth should resume by the end of 1989.



A renaissance of optimism for U.S. capital spending.

The American economy is undergoing a major change: the Industrial Renaissance. Exports are growing strongly. That means a rise in orders for American capital goods and an excellent long-term opportunity to profit from the rebuilding of our industrial base.



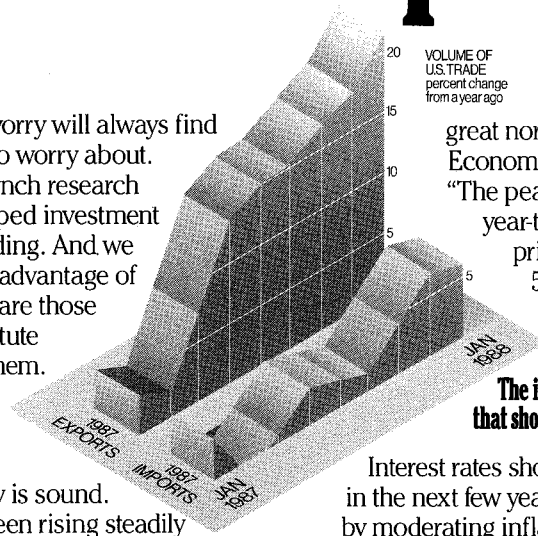
Inflation Jitters—Valid but Exaggerated Concerns

The memory of double-digit inflation in the late 1970s has pronounced effect on financial-market behavior today. The market reacts vigorously and harshly to any signs of incipient inflation. In turn, the response of the markets influences monetary policy of the Federal Reserve, which in turn influences the inflation rate.

We also see emerging opportunities in selected high-yielding stocks such as those of utilities and insurance companies. And, as Merrill Lynch Chief Investment Strategist Charles I. Clough points out, "Foreign investment flows into dollar-denominated financial assets are likely to be increasingly supportive of the U.S. financial markets."

Inflation is up. But not severely.

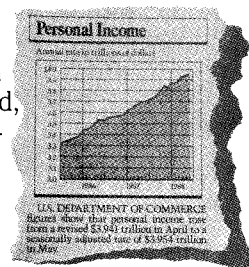
While the drought in the Midwest is boosting food prices, the overall effect should be neither



great nor long-lasting. As our Chief Economist Don Straszheim puts it, "The peak inflation rate, based on year-to-year changes in consumer prices, is likely to be about 5.5%, far below the 14.5% peak in the second quarter of 1980."

The interest rate outlook. Something that should make everyone feel optimistic.

Interest rates should decline substantially in the next few years. This would be spurred by moderating inflation, slower economic growth in 1989, and a rising surplus in the Social Security trust fund, which will make the government a bigger customer for its own debt, reducing the amount it must raise from the public.



This means that U.S. Treasury bonds and high-quality corporate and municipal bonds—which are now paying healthy interest rates—are also likely to increase considerably in value.

We believe the time to act is now.

For a fuller discussion of these opportunities, ask for our research report titled, "Unfolding Opportunities Amid Diminishing Expectations." Write Merrill Lynch Response Center, P.O. Box 30200, New Brunswick, N.J. 08989-0200 or call 1-800-637-7455, ext. 7066, or contact your Merrill Lynch Financial Consultant. We stand ready with specific recommendations.

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

IN BRIEF—Cont'd

issue.) (Coronet, Olympia, 8th St. Playhouse, and National Twin.)

SAINT JACK (1979)—A film made by Peter Bogdanovich and set in 1971 in Singapore, where an American called Jack Flowers, played by Ben Gazzara, scrapes together a stingy living promoting business for a Chinese ship chandler's firm; off duty, he is a pimp with dreams of running the poshest whorehouse in the world. Denholm Elliott, as an accountant, acts with focus and alertness. The script is by Howard Sackler, Paul Theroux, and Bogdanovich.—P.G. (Thalia SoHo; Sept. 16-17.)

THE SHOP AROUND THE CORNER (1940)—Close to perfection—one of the most beautifully acted and paced romantic comedies ever made in this country. It is set in the enclosed world of the people who work together in a small department store; Margaret Sullavan and James Stewart are the employees who bicker with each other, and in no other movie has this kind of love-hate been made so convincing. Their performances are full of grace notes; when you watch later James Stewart films, you may wonder what became of this other, deft, sensitive pre-drawing Stewart. As for Sullavan, this is a peerless performance: she makes the shopgirl's pretensions believable, lyrical, and funny. Directed by Ernst Lubitsch. With Frank Morgan, Joseph Schildkraut, William Tracy, Sara Haden, Edwin Maxwell, and Inez Courtney. (Biograph Cinema; Sept. 16-17.)

SWEET SMELL OF SUCCESS (1957)—The movie is a sweet slice of perversity—a study of dollar and power worship, with Burt Lancaster as a Broadway gossip columnist and Tony Curtis as an ingratiating, blackmailing press agent. Clifford Odets never came through more puny-gently as a screenwriter; his distinctively idiomatic dialogue is harshly expressive and taut. The director, Alexander Mackendrick, has a crisp *film noir* style: the production is shaped by a zest for the corrupt milieu, the pulsating big-city life (what used to be called "the symphony of a city")—the streets, the night clubs, the cynical types, the noise and desperation. The melodrama is somewhat synthetic and is pitched very high, but the film has body and flavor. With Martin Milner, Susan Harrison, Barbara Nichols, Sam Levene, and Emile Meyer. (Cinema Village; Sept. 16-17.)

TABU (1931)—Working together, two great directors—Robert Flaherty and the German Expressionist F. W. Murnau—began this South Seas picture; they disagreed and Flaherty split. Murnau was killed in an auto accident before the opening of this marvellous, deeply flawed classic. It has some of the worst scenes that have ever been part of a work of screen art—cavorting natives and a creaking plot and a heroine with plucked eyebrows—and its musical score combines plaintive, moaning choirs, bits of Schubert, and the "Moldau," but the dancing is superlative and there are extraordinary pictorial effects. Silent. (Thalia SoHo; Sept. 18.)

THE THIN BLUE LINE—Errol Morris's trancelike, almost lyrical documentary tells the story of a 1976 cop-killing in Dallas and examines the process by which a man who is almost certainly innocent was convicted and sentenced to death for the crime. The movie doesn't have the structure either of "60 Minutes"-style investigative journalism or of detective fiction, though it borrows elements from both; its form is circular, spiralling, its obsessive, repetitive visual motifs echoed in Philip Glass's hauntingly monotonous score. There are interviews with the principals, closeups of key words and paragraphs from newspaper accounts, courtroom sketches, maps, family-album snapshots, diagrams, and a series of eerie reenactments of witnesses' different versions of the murder and the events that led up to it. This is documentary as epistemological thriller: Morris wants to bring us to the point at which our apprehension of the real world reaches the pitch of paranoia. In showing us the lies, the fears, the social pressures, the ulterior motives, the stubbornness, and the plain confusion that combined to produce the case against the unfortunate Randall Adams—whose fate is worthy of a Borges hero—Morris seems to be investigating not just this squalid murder but the very

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nature of untruth. His style is occasionally too fancy and elliptical for absolute clarity, but this is a powerful and thrillingly strange movie. Morris—who actually uncovered new evidence in the course of making the film—has turned Randall Adams' case into a kind of tabloid poetry, a meditation on uncertainty and the fascination of violence.—T.R. (9/5/88) (Lincoln Plaza.)

TOO MANY HUSBANDS (1940)—In "My Favorite Wife" and its many variations, the husband with two wives is generally frantic. Here, Jean Arthur, caught between Fred MacMurray and Melvyn Douglas, loves the dilemma. A well-written, light-spirited comedy, adapted by Claude Binyon from Somerset Maugham's play "Home and Beauty." The cast includes Harry Davenport, Melville Cooper, Edgar Buchanan, and Dorothy Peterson. Directed by Wesley Ruggles. (Biograph Cinema; Sept. 20-21.)

TUCKER: THE MAN AND HIS DREAM—There are marvellous moments throughout Francis Ford Coppola's biography of Preston Tucker (Jeff Bridges), a Midwestern inventor/entrepreneur who tried, and failed, to manufacture and market an innovative new automobile in the late forties. The style of "Tucker" is hyped-up forties Hollywood, and we believe, at first, that its intent is ironic, that Coppola is playing with America's optimistic, movie- and magazine-fuelled vision of itself in the postwar years. Bafflingly, this style doesn't change, or even modulate, when Tucker's bold enterprise starts to come apart, undermined by pressure from the government and the big three auto companies; the movie remains grandiose and artificial—all golden lighting and low, heroic angles. "Tucker" collapses in nostalgia, bad faith, and Capra-style populism. Also with Joan Allen, Martin Landau, Frederic Forrest, Mako, Lloyd Bridges (uncredited), and Dean Stockwell, who does a lovely, mysterious cameo as Howard Hughes. Screenplay by Arnold Schulman and David Seidler; cinematography by Vittorio Storaro.—T.R. (8/22/88) (Loews 34th Street Showplace, Cinema II, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

LES VISITEURS DU SOIR (1942; "The Devil's Envoys")—A fantasy romance set in the fifteenth century and based on a French legend: "And so in the beautiful month of May, 1485, the Devil sent on earth two of his creatures in order to drive the human beings to despair." The director, Marcel Carné, and the writers, Jacques Prévert and Pierre Larroche, intended a magical and seductive film poem, and they certainly had the cast for it—Arletty with her great, lustrous eyes, Jules Berry as the Devil, Marie Déa, Alain Cuny (unfortunately, he's young and looks like a wooden Indian), Fernand Ledoux, Gabriel Gabrio, and Marcel Herrand. There are wonderful images (such as a medieval ball, with the dancers suddenly frozen) but the movie is heavy on the allegorical and becomes rather slow and overstylized. Perhaps the sentiments (the Devil himself, i.e.,

Hitler, is unable to corrupt true lovers) are a little too fragrant. Art direction by Alexandre Trauner and Georges Wakhévitch; cinematography by Roger Hubert; music by Joseph Kosma and Maurice Thiriet. In French. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 19.)

WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT?—This manic comedy, in which animated cartoon characters interact with live actors, is an amazing feat of entertainment engineering—like a Disneyland ride or a World's Fair movie. The setting is Los Angeles in 1947, and the screenplay, by Jeffrey Price and Peter Seaman, takes off from the fairly witty conceit that the cartoon characters, called Toons here, are ordinary contract players in the already skewed universe of the Hollywood studio system. These strange creatures become involved in a conventional forties mystery plot, featuring a seedy, hard-drinking private eye (Bob Hoskins). The director, Robert Zemeckis, and his small army of animators and special-effects artists mean to pay homage to the Hollywood animation of the thirties and forties, but the movie doesn't have the right spirit. Technology and plot mechanics labor mightily to evoke an aura of freedom and uninhibited joy—yet there's hardly a spontaneous moment in the film. Also with Christopher Lloyd, Joanna Cassidy, and Stubby Kaye. The funniest Toon, Roger's sireny wife, Jessica, speaks with Kathleen Turner's (uncredited) voice and sings with Amy Irving's. The director of animation was Richard Williams. Adapted, very loosely, from the novel "Who Censored Roger Rabbit?", by Gary K. Wolf.—T.R. (7/11/88) (Gramercy, and Embassy. . . ♪ Manhattan Twin; through Sept. 15.)

WINGS OF DESIRE ("Der Himmel über Berlin")—The director, Wim Wenders, who wrote the script with the collaboration of Peter Handke, has a theme: in an approximation of Rilke's words, "Joy has gone astray." We're told that "when the child was a child" stories held together. Now all we have is fragmentation, entropy. Two angels—Daniel (Bruno Ganz) and Cassiel (Otto Sander)—hover over the bleak, divided city and move among the forlorn Berliners, listening to what's in their minds: listening to the questions about existence that these people ask themselves. Our overhearing what the angels hear—the thoughts chanted on the track, all in even, quiet tones, as grayed out as the sunless skies—works on us like a tranquilizer. Eventually, Daniel falls in love with a beautiful French aerialist (Solveig Dommartin), and gives up his wings. With Peter Falk, who brings some funky warmth to the role of an American movie star, and Curt Bois as a sad-faced old man called Homer. The cinematography (tinted black-and-white, and color) is by Henri Alekan. This Franco-German production is in English, French, and German. (5/30/88) (Cinema Studio.)

A WORLD APART—Set in 1963, it's about a thirteen-year-old girl (Jodhi May) who lives a well-ordered, ruling-class life in a fine home in suburban Johannesburg until her father (Jeroen Krabbé), who's a Communist, flees the country in the middle of the night to escape arrest, and her mother (Barbara Hershey), the editor of a small anti-apartheid newspaper, is "detained" for ninety days, and then another ninety days. Based on a semi-autobiographical script by Shawn Slovo, the daughter of the journalist Ruth First and Joe Slovo, the leader of the banned South African Communist Party, the movie deals with the girl's feeling confused and resentful—the fight against apartheid is also her competitor. In prison or out, her mother is not all there for her. The theme of the movie is the conflict between fighting injustice and what we owe to our families—or, more poignantly, a young girl's pain at the loss of her mother and father, though she knows the reason for it. Shot in Zimbabwe, this remarkable first feature directed by the noted cinematographer Chris Menges has a visual snap to it. It's luminous yet very informal. And though, toward the end, it falls into chanting slogans, it has a radiant intelligence. The cast includes Linda Mvusi, who shared the best-actress award at Cannes with May and Hershey, and Tim Roth, Yvonne Bryceland, Albee Lesotho, David Suchet, and Nadine Chalmers. (6/13/88) (Quad Cinema.)



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THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

WE don't get a lot of news from Africa—at least, not from that part of Africa known as sub-Saharan or black Africa, which excludes the northern part of the continent, considered part of the Arab world, and also South Africa. There are some forty countries and three hundred million people in black Africa, yet only three American newspapers regard the region as important enough to keep full-time correspondents there—the *Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Christian Science Monitor*. CNN has a man in Nairobi, who ably roams the continent, but cable still isn't available throughout the United States, and neither ABC nor CBS nor NBC has a permanent team in black Africa. Perhaps this drought of coverage provides some insight into why Americans, as recent surveys have revealed, know so little about world geography.

Many Africans, however, think the lack of media attention is just fine. They, like others in the Third World, complain that foreign correspondents are interested only in bad news—floods, famines, violence, civil wars. And they feel they are treated unfairly when foreign journalists do report on them. Their complaints were underscored last month when foreigners bearing press credentials invaded the Central African nation of Burundi, a country that is smaller than nearby Lake Victoria and has a population of about four million. Thirty journalists, speaking English (with American and British accents), French, Italian, and German, converged on Bujumbura, the capital. Many of them rushed down from the Sudan, where they had been chronicling the devastation and starvation wreaked there by the flooding of the Nile and by the civil war. The blitz

on Burundi, which only a few of the invading scribes had ever been to before, was brought about by an outbreak of ethnic violence between the Tutsi and the Hutu. The Hutu make up eighty-five per cent of the population, but the Tutsi exercise rigid control over the country: eighty-five per cent of the high-school and university students are said to be Tutsi; ninety-nine per cent of the Army is Tutsi. The situation has been called "black apartheid." In 1972, the Tutsi government systematically murdered at least a hundred thousand Hutu, including nearly all the educated élite.

When trouble erupts, the response of most Third World governments is to seal the borders, keeping journalists out or, by means of censorship, the news in. Thus, we've been getting our news about what's happening in Rangoon from reporters in Bangkok; in South Africa, censorship is now so much an accepted reality that the *Times* no longer feels it necessary to note it in italics; the Indonesian government still won't allow journalists free access to East Timor, more than a decade after Indonesian troops invaded it and killed tens of thousands of Timorese who wanted independence. What a surprise, then, when the Burundian government swiftly issued visas to journalists. And once the journalists were inside Burundi they found government officials

willing to talk, and without requesting anonymity. Indeed, just one day after the first journalistic wave arrived, the country's President, Major Pierre Buyoya, faced the reporters—something that many world leaders are chary of doing—and the government then allowed them to travel to the northern provinces, where the fighting had been concentrated, though it was hardly unaware that they would be pursuing reports that government soldiers had killed hundreds of civilians.

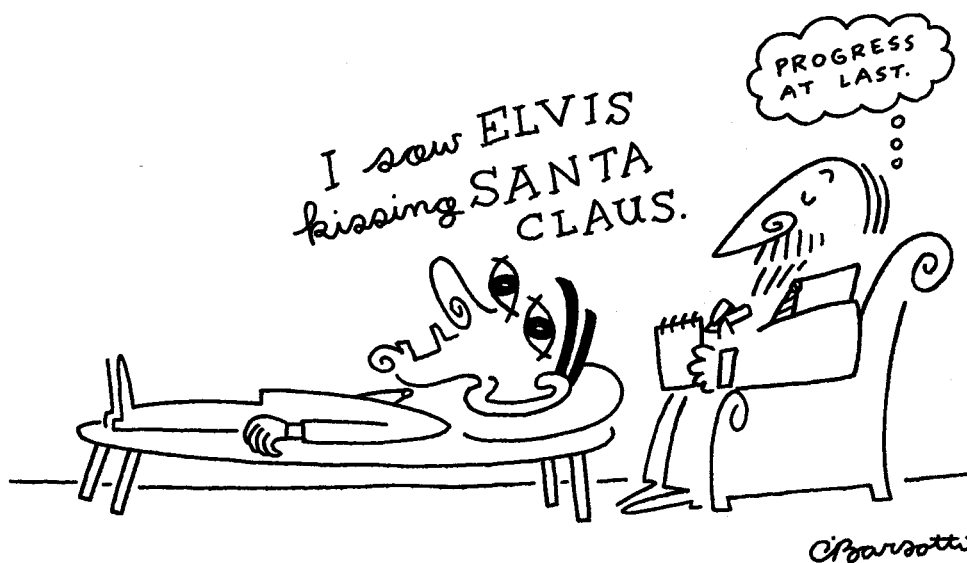
According to neutral observers—high officials in the Roman Catholic Church and Western ambassadors—the violence erupted when Hutu attacked Tutsi with machetes and spears. In one instance, a mob of Hutu killed fourteen Tutsi who had sought safety in a church. It's not certain what caused the Hutu to attack. It may have been a fear, fanned by rumors and the presence of the Army in the area on military exercises, that the Tutsi were going to begin killing Hutu, as they had done in 1972. Whatever the cause, the government sent in soldiers in full battle gear, supported by helicopter gunships and armored personnel carriers, to restore order. When the soldiers came across the bodies of their fellow-Tutsi, some of which were mutilated, they went on a rampage, shooting and stabbing Hutu women and children.

A significant number of the foreign reports focussed on the killings by the government, ignoring, or noting only in brief, considerable evidence that the Hutu had instigated the violence and had killed unarmed civilians. There was no justification for the Burundian Army's extreme response—it amounted to random and indiscriminate murder of innocent people—and it's unlikely that any of the soldiers will ever be punished. It may be that as many as



move. Much of the trackage of what was then the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad runs close to the shoreline of Long Island Sound after it leaves New London, but beyond Mystic, which is five or six miles from New London, we entered a kind of sea. There was water on both sides of the train, and, on both sides, islands with occasional houses on them. Above the train, the air had suddenly become gray with flying objects—boards and tree branches and what might have been clothes. By three-thirty, we were on the gravel trestle that crosses a low area just west of the Stonington station. It wasn't a trestle anymore, though; water covered the tracks. The train, barely moving, stopped, then went fifty yards and stopped again. (A woman on the train who was taking her daughter to another school near Boston is quoted in Everett Allen's book "A Wind to Shake the World" as saying, "After the train left New London, we became aware of danger. Trees had been felled along the route and as the train went over a causeway [leading into Stonington] we saw the water pounding angrily on both sides. The train trembled like a bicycle ineptly ridden.")

Ten minutes later, the Oriental began leaning noticeably to the right. One rumor said a trawler was wedged on the tracks in front of the locomotive; another said a house was. A conductor appeared, and told Roderick Hagenbuckle that the train might capsize, and we were to move forward immediately, to the first car. Leave our luggage, he said—it would be sent on later. (I had a small suitcase.) We got through the next two cars, and then, because of the increasing jam-up (there were over two hundred and fifty people on board), someone suggested we get out of the train and walk up the left, or leeward, side to the first car. I went into the open vestibule with half a dozen Fessendens, and we looked out. There was nothing but water and wind and a curious smell, almost a burning smell. Water stretched as far as I could see, and scattered houses appeared to float on it. The wind was maniacal. It sounded like unceasing jeering, and it was punctuated with thuds and crashes as debris smashed into the windward side of the train. Everything—homesickness, fear, and chagrin over the prospect of getting my brand-new Rogers Peet clothes *wet*—hit at once,



and I started to weep. A lady I have always thought of as being from Texas said some kind words and offered me a sip of Coca-Cola. Two people went down the steps and into the water, awkwardly turned right, and vanished. We followed. Stepping into that chest-deep water was one of the strangest sensations I have known: the water was not cold but it felt icy; it was not turbulent but it felt rough and malevolent. The Texas lady grabbed my right arm and said something, but the wind blew it away. We passed four cars before we reached the first one. The going was slow and clumsy. We were walking on railroad ties and sank almost to our necks whenever we missed one. Whatever had been on the tracks in front of the train had been swept away. Fifteen or twenty people were struggling along a heavy line that had been stretched from the locomotive to a tree or a telephone pole a hundred feet away. I wondered if we would have to do that next. But we were hoisted up the steps at the rear of the first car and pushed inside. Nearly the whole trainload of passengers was in the car, and the din almost shut out the noise of the storm. The rest of the train had been emptied, and after a trainman, working mostly underwater, uncoupled the next car, the locomotive, with barely enough pressure, began to move. A cheer went up, and what was left of the train crept several hundred feet up a gradually curving incline and into the dry, safe Stonington station.

The rest is almost anticlimactic. A third of the Fessenden contingent got off on the right side of the train and

ended up for the night in a Catholic school, while the rest of us got off on the left and made our way up a hill to the Stonington town hall. We spent the night on camp chairs in a large, gymlike room. My Texas friend cut off my necktie, which had shrunk to the point of strangulation. The next morning broke—as all mornings break after great storms—blue and clear and with that innocent "What did I do?" look to the sky. The chaos outside was unbelievable: downed elephantine elms, crushed automobiles, askew houses, live wires hanging like snakes from telephone poles. Even more sinister were table-size slates that had blown off the town-hall roof and sliced into the ground around it with decapitating force. We were put on a bus to the Westerly, Rhode Island, train station, and we sat on a motionless train there for four hours. We were then put on another bus, which somehow got through to West Newton. At the school, we were bathed, given shots, and put to bed for two days. Roderick Hagenbuckle, God rest his soul (he ended his days running a sailing camp on Cape Cod), never lost his cool, and had even managed to let the school know we were alive.

The statistics of the storm are still astonishing. With winds clocked at a hundred and eighty-six miles per hour, it hit at high tide without any warning, and almost seven hundred people died. (The weather bureau depended on ships at sea for information about oncoming storms, but, for whatever reason, there were no ships reporting between Cape Hatteras, where the

storm had last been sighted, and Long Island. And, of course, everyone in the Northeast had grown lax about hurricanes. None of consequence had hit since 1815.) The property damage was astronomical—twenty thousand houses, two hundred and seventy-five million trees, six thousand boats, twenty-six thousand cars, and on and on.

My suitcase appeared out of the blue the following summer. It had been found in Long Island Sound, and it was swollen and sprung. Inside were an empty toilet kit, a hard-back brush, and leather-bound copies of the Bible and Mary Baker Eddy's "Science and Health," compliments of my Christian Scientist mother, who never tired of attributing my survival to the presence of the books in my suitcase. Both books were twice their original size and re-

sembled small blimps. On the flyleaf of the Bible, in barely decipherable water-blurred ink, were my name and address and the customary cosmic tag: "United States of America, Western Hemisphere, World, the Universe."

Hundred-and-Fortieth

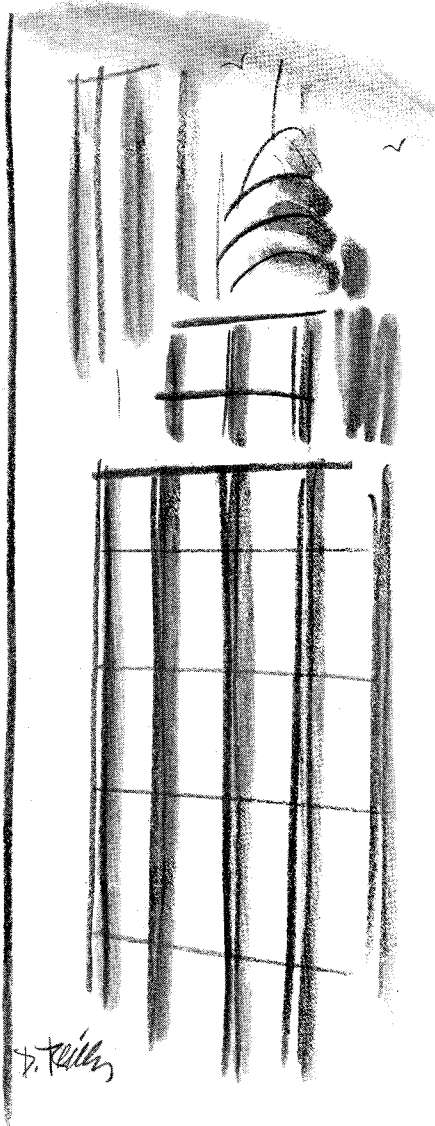
WE drove up to Seneca Falls on a hot, windy Saturday for the hundred-and-fortieth anniversary of the first women's-rights convention. Seneca Falls is also the home of the Women's Rights National Historical Park—a fact announced along the Thruway. We followed the signs and, in the middle of town, arrived at a small brick building—the park visitors' center—wedged between a pizzeria and the venerable Gould Hotel. A

few doors down stood an empty laundromat, its windows plastered with photographs of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and other nineteenth-century feminists. The laundromat, we discovered, is perhaps the single most important building in the National Park—which encompasses three acres in downtown Seneca Falls and two more acres in nearby Waterloo—for it incorporates part of the Wesleyan chapel where three hundred women and men gathered for that 1848 women's-rights convention. There—under the dedicated leadership of thirty-two-year-old Elizabeth Cady Stanton—they drew up a Declaration of Sentiments, which called for eighteen rights for women, among them the right to vote.

There are no known photographs of the entire chapel, which in the mid-nineteenth century was called the Great Lighthouse and also the Devil's Depot, since it was rumored to be part of the Underground Railroad. Most of two side walls and four of six roof trusses remain of the original structure, which was eventually converted into a meeting hall, then into an opera house, then into a movie theatre, then into an auto salesroom, and, finally, into the laundromat. In the summer of 1978, when a National Park Service legislative specialist named Judy Hart began poking around Seneca Falls, residents simply assumed that the chapel had been torn down years ago.

Ms. Hart, a jovial-looking woman of extraordinary energy, who appears to sail forward rather than walk, told us that in August of 1978 she had been appointed Chief Ranger in the Boston regional office in charge of Legislation for National Parks. Her boss asked her to propose some new projects, and she went through her Directory of National Historic Landmarks. In an eight-state region she found only two listings pertaining to women, and one was Elizabeth Cady Stanton's house, in Seneca Falls.

Meanwhile, a group of local women had formed the Elizabeth Cady Stanton Foundation and was exploring ways to save the house, which stood a mile from the chapel, on the east side of town, and was up for sale. Ms. Hart and the Stanton Foundation fell in together, and the project swiftly gathered momentum, thereby sparing the foundation what one of its board members, Suzanne Cusick, called "a



"You'll get used to the rhythm of it after a while, kid. You finish one, the 'Times' says it stinks, then you move on and start another."

lifetime of bake sales." The National Park Service approved a study for a Women's Rights National Historical Park in 1979, congressional hearings were held the following year, and on December 28, 1980, shortly before leaving office, President Carter signed into law a bill creating the park.

In 1982, Ms. Hart became the park superintendent, and that same year the foundation bought the Stanton House and donated it to the Park Service. But the problem of what to do about the Wesleyan chapel remained. The abandoned laundromat had become a community joke.

"Nobody knew much about the chapel," Ms. Hart explained. "We'd just stand here and conjecture. We did archeological digs, tested mortar samples chemically. We were looking at generations of alterations. This is typical of women's history. Nobody ever thought of preserving such places. What happened here in 1848 was the first time ordinary people had gathered publicly in an ordinary place to do something about women's rights. Three hundred people coming together was enough of an event to spark a movement. I wanted the chapel to be inspiring, and what we had here was not inspiring."

In 1987, Hart hit upon the idea of a national design competition, and, with the help of Peter Smith, an organizer of design competitions for the National Endowment for the Arts, the Park Service created a contest that attracted seven hundred and fifty-one registrants. The first registration check came from an architect who was Elizabeth Cady Stanton's great-granddaughter.

Two hundred and twelve designs were actually submitted, and during the weekend they were on display on the first floor of a building that was formerly the village hall; among them were giant glass enclosures, post-modern silos, an inclined water course, structures shaped in double helices or concentric circles, and a Tudor-style



"I keep thinking how much pleasanter New York would be without Ed, Donald, and George."

mansion complete with reflecting pool. Some entries enclosed the original chapel in a new building, and a dozen proposed an imaginative restoration of the chapel to its 1848 appearance.

The winning design is by Ray Kinoshita and Ann Wills Marshall, two young women who attended Harvard's Graduate School of Design and are now design associates with the Stein Partnership, in New York City. It consists of a grassy incline, a wall with the Declaration of Sentiments engraved on it and water running over it, and a stone amphitheatre facing the Declaration. The architectural remains of the original chapel are protected by metal plates. The whole design has a stark elegance about it.

At a symposium that afternoon, the two young women spoke with a similarly economic elegance about their design. "How do you express not only the moment but what's eternal?" Ms. Kinoshita asked. "Making monuments has been a male-oriented endeavor. How do you build a monument for a movement with an incomplete past and an uncertain future? We were working

with fragments to make a whole."

"At first, the entire project seemed fragmented," Ms. Marshall said. "I had a job, and Ray was finishing her last year of school. We worked on it every weekend and most evenings for four months. An important issue for us was the mediation of dualities—the remoteness of the place and the national and international importance of the site. We wanted to address the ideals as well as the daily lives of the people who live here in Seneca Falls. This was a simple building that opened its doors to people who wanted to meet there. We viewed the Wesleyan chapel as part of that larger democratic idea. But we didn't see the chapel as the only focus—there was also the Declaration of Sentiments, the struggles we still address every day. We're riding on the energy of the women who came before us."

Digger

BEFORE Digger O'Day was Digger O'Day, he was Bob Shelley, who in 1973 gave up a career in jour-

nalism to begin one as a guy who finds unusual things for people who want them found. As the founder, president, and sole employee of the Digger O'Day Finder's Service ("When We Get Behind It, We Find It"), he has found a two-story house, in Pigeon Cove, Massachusetts, made out of rolled-up newspapers; another house—this one in Boswell, British Columbia—made out of embalming-fluid bottles; a site of ceremonial puberty rites for Apache maidens; and a band of firefighting rabbits. He is good at what he does.

Digger O'Day works out of and divides his time between a trailer office in Champlain, New York, and a trailer office just outside Montreal, Canada, and early one morning not long ago we flew up to Montreal to watch him in action. We knew he'd been working for some time on locating the ring of John Dillinger, which had been mysteriously removed from the gangster's body right after his death. (He was shot and killed by federal agents in 1934 as he was coming out of the Biograph Theatre in Chicago.) And on the plane, as we worked away on our microwaved omelette, we promised ourself that, in our spectacularly fashion, we'd leave no stone unturned.

After picking us up at Dorval Airport, Digger, who has rust-colored hair, pale skin, and a large, toothy grin, filled us in on details of the case. "Not long ago, a man got in touch with me because he wanted certain relics of the mobster era," he said. "These included bullet-scarred bricks from Bugs Moran's garage, where the St. Valentine's Day Massacre took place, and, primarily, John Dillinger's ring. The bricks were no problem—I lucked into them. Luck is very important in this business. I was being interviewed at a radio station in Vancouver, and I mentioned the bricks—how they'd been eluding me, and I was wondering where they could be. All of a sudden, the guy who's interviewing me gets very excited and says, 'They're here—the bricks. They're here in Vancouver, at a bar called the Banjo Palace.' I headed straight for the bar. It was wonderful—the bricks were in the men's room. But up to this point locating Dillinger's ring hasn't been so

easy. From the time he was gunned down in the street to the time he was taken to the morgue, several possessions, including his gun, were taken illegally. The ring, a gold band with an attached ruby and an inscription reading 'To John, with love, Polly,' has generated the most curiosity. For one thing, several experts on Dillinger, including Joe Pinkston, of the John Dillinger Historical Museum, in Nashville, Indiana, believe that Dillinger may have had the ring before he met Polly, and had it inscribed himself or arranged for her to have it done. Also, it's well known that the ring was his most prized possession. He was very much in love with Polly, you see. And perhaps the feds, who had been working on nailing Dillinger for some time and undoubtedly knew everything there was to know about him, took the ring as a souvenir of their victory. In any case, you've come on a



good day, because this afternoon I'm going to call Joe Pinkston, who has been doing a lot of work on the ring since I spoke with him last. Let's hope he's got something."

When Digger had parked the car in downtown Montreal, he said, "Since we have a few hours until I'm supposed to call Joe, let's take a walk through the city. Do you like to walk?" He strode eastward, and in no time he was telling us about his finding techniques, his finder's fee, and his problems.

The Finding Techniques: "People—and this could mean a woman who wants a set of ceramic baked-potato boats, say, or a man who's looking for a book entitled 'Gumpy, Son of Spunk'—make their requests through the mail or by telephone. They've heard of me by word of mouth, or maybe they've heard me being interviewed on radio. Right away, I look through all my catalogues—I have boxes and boxes of catalogues. I consult my computer, which has stored in it all the things I've found and how I found them. I start to write letters. I make phone calls. I put people in touch. That's what I do—I put people in touch with people who can give them what they're looking for. It's not like I'm the one who goes out and finds these strange things. It's more like safe detective work—it doesn't take you out into the streets."

The Finder's Fee: "I'm not in this for the money. No matter who you are or what you're looking for, I only charge twenty dollars a find. And you don't have to pay me until I've found whatever it is you're looking for. Usually, it doesn't take more than two months. But it could take two years. For some time, I've been working for a woman who's looking for a letter written by her great-grandfather that entitles her to a diamond mine. So when I locate the letter it translates like this: I get twenty bucks, and she gets a hill of priceless gems."

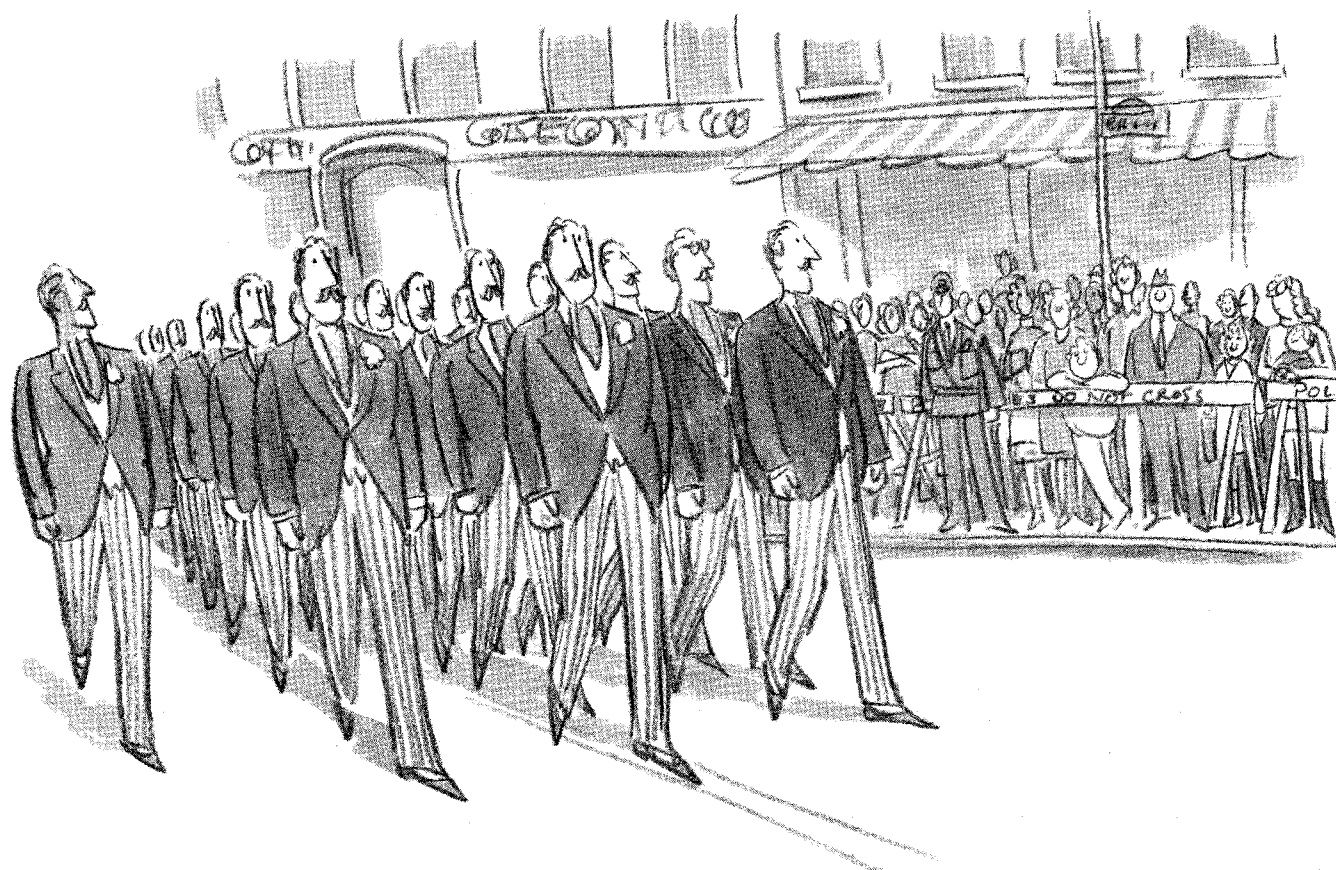
The Problems: "Sometimes I get these letters from people who ask me to find something that doesn't exist. That really bugs me. But I get the most trouble from people who are looking for other people. They'll write me and say, 'Dear Digger, I'm looking for this guy. I don't know where he could be, but he has a scar over his left eye and he talks with a lisp. Do you think you can find him?'"

Outside Digger's Montreal office, which is parked in the driveway of his home, we met his wife, Eileen; his boa constrictor, Jake; his six cats; and a couple of Doberman pinschers, who were "just visiting." Then, in the trailer, where we were surrounded by several human skulls (real), a handful of shrunken heads (not real), a snake charmer's flute, and a one-and-a-half-inch-square King James Bible, we looked on as Digger called Joe Pinkston, at the Dillinger Museum. Almost immediately, he switched from talking excitedly to listening intently. We began to see whole boulders turning themselves before us. When Digger hung up, he said, "This is our lucky day. Joe has been doing his research. He says that Melvin Purvis, who was a senior federal agent in the Dillinger case, might have had the ring in his possession until he died. Joe thinks he has a lead on Dillinger's gun, too, but he's not a hundred per cent on that. Anyway, when Purvis died a man who owns a car dealership near Florence, South Carolina, and is said to be a mobster-era buff supposedly bought a lot of his personal belongings. So chances are he's got the ring. All I have to do is call the South Carolina Automobile Dealers Association to find this guy. Joe told me he sells some kind of Japanese car. I mean, how many Nissan dealerships can there be near Florence, South Carolina?"

UPRISING



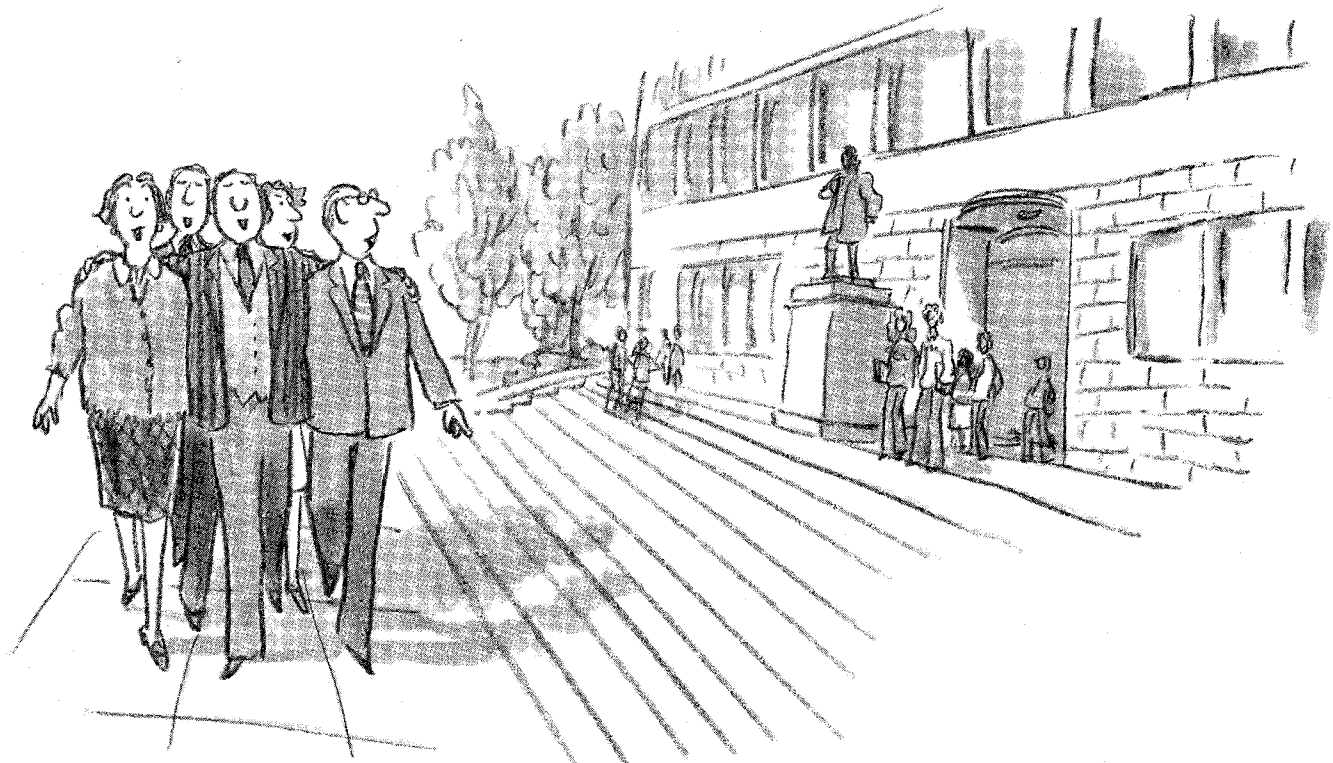
The Slow-Food Eat-In at McDonald's



The Adolphe Menjou Parade



The Nice-Graffiti Contest



The Mixed-Chorus Performance of "Star Dust" on the Steps of Mohasset High School



The Great Rock-Video Bonfire



The Memorial Reading from the Works of Fred Allen

THE PRINCE OF WALES

MY mother gave me a diary once—a small book with a puffy red leatherette cover, a lock, and a tiny gold key. Did you need a key? You could have opened that lock with a twist of a hairpin. I felt bad that I never wrote in that diary. I think my mother knew I never did. My mother also bought me the Nancy Drew books, she bought me “Black Beauty,” she bought me “The Little Prince.” My appetite was for other stories, *real* stories. One day she found those I had hidden behind the refrigerator. She gave up on me. I became a sore spot to her. If that’s the way you want to go, she said, go.

Someone would have to marry Fay. Howard bought a gun from a man beneath the railroad bridge. The Emmelins were planning to have his father put away. The Spaeckel boys went every Tuesday to a special house in Oconomowoc. When the kitchen shades were up, Mrs. Welch could be seen banging her head rhythmically against the wall.

And this was just one week’s gossip. It is true that my passion could have settled elsewhere, but you could transport gossip—gossip was at home anywhere. From 1949 to 1951 my family moved six times, fighting labor’s battles from Milwaukee to West Allis to Sheboygan, then back again. We didn’t get as far as Chicago. We were never German enough for the Germans or Polish enough for the Poles. If they ask you, my mother said, tell them you are a unionist.

Sometimes we moved because some rubber-stomached landlady said, I don’t want any more nuts like you living here—where do people like you come from, anyway? Sometimes we fled a trail of bad luck. Add to this the times when the furnace broke down or the doors slammed too hard if the rent was late. Back and forth we went, courting breakage with lamps and boxes tumbled into the trunks of ten-year-old cars. We lived on Twenty-first, then off Twenty-ninth, then on Twenty-

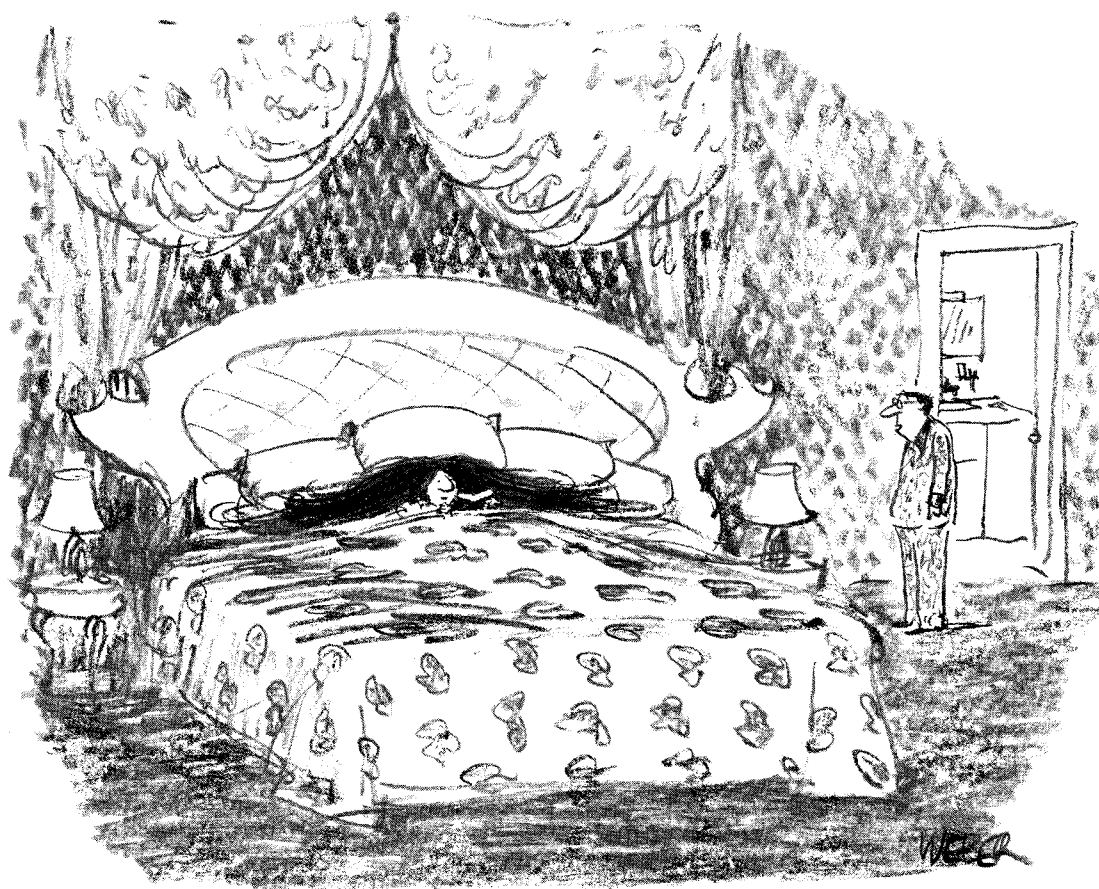
sixth. The horizon of my life changed, but I always made friends.

Mine was a family of movers, searchers, mobile Americans. And I blamed a lot on that. I wasn’t doing well in school. I said that was the reason, ignoring the fact that my brother received almost perfect grades. I decided that what was solid in the world was tales. And so I found gossip, and it improved life.

ALMOST as soon as we settled in to our new second-floor flat on Twenty-third Street, I met Gina Rheinhardt. I was age fifteen and Gina Rheinhardt was twenty-eight. Gina had three children, and her husband drove a Bluebell bus to Prairie du Chien and La Crosse and sometimes did the run to Duluth. Does age matter? Friends are friends. Coffee, Gina said. I was willing. Your mother? she added. I shook my head. Leah made her own coffee.

Gina’s cups had names on them, or sayings. I got a brown cup with “GIRL” in yellow raised letters with a bleeding glaze. Gina thought it was a Florida cup. All their cups were souvenirs, some from their trip to Florida, some from the mother-in-law in Santa Rosa, and some from the Christmas Village in the Dells, where they went on a summer vacation.

It’s a dump around here, Gina told me. My family used to live on Twenty-fourth, near the Second Avenue School, but I went to St. Anne’s. I marched to that tune right through high school, and then I went into the telephone company with two of my girlfriends. My Hugh was dating one of those girls, but she went to Chicago for a month and that was that. Hugh and I got married. I stayed on at the phone company for eight months, until Dolores came. I was stuck then. After that,



“Is there room for me?”

Sandy came, then Baby Hugh. I'd go back to the phone company in a flash, if I could.

Leah said that a woman that age taking up with me was bad taste. My mother didn't realize how snobbish she sounded. You would have thought we numbered in our family people who had amounted to something. I told my mother that she really didn't know Gina. Leah looked up from her book and said that she bet Gina Rheinhardt's table was sticky to the touch and that in *her* bookcases were knickknacks and gewgaws.

I didn't answer. After all, there were circumstances; I knew that Leah was touchy—especially now that she had a new job selling linens in Carpenter's Everything for Your Home and they told her to wear dark dresses and they liked white collars. My mother hated pushing herself into a corset every morning. Hell of a way to live, she said. But she had run out of factory jobs. She was, she said, persona non grata in plenty of personnel offices. My father had a pinched nerve and pain that sizzled through him. It was verifiable. He brought home an X-ray one day and dropped it on the table. See, he said. My father did what he could.

Gina and I traded movie magazines—we knew who was seen together, knew about mysterious liaisons and unclaimed children. I supplied items from the newspapers. Whatever Gina missed I filled in. Gina was not basically a reader, but she had imagination.

But Gina didn't have a sense of history. I tried to tell her how good gossip was in the past. In fact, how all the truly great stories seemed to be over. Hadn't everything really important happened before I was old enough to talk about it? Consider the Prince of Wales and Wally. That had everything, including a *real* king. Charlie Chaplin and all those girls. Fatty

Arbuckle. All before my time. You had to read about them. That's the problem, Gina said. That was all yesterday—it can't change. She was interested in what was happening now; after it was over, she was done with it.

I had developed a philosophy of gossip. I explained what it was one Saturday morning to Gina. Gossip, I said, is like fairy tales. Think about fairy tales. Take "Rumpelstiltskin," for instance—it's a scandal, isn't it, if that ugly old gnome gets his hands on that pretty young girl. Same with "The Snow Queen" and "The Princess and the Pea." That's fairy tales for you—a lot of wicked stepmothers and wrong marriages and mistreated children. We could make up local fairy tales. When we saw Mr. Zimmerman drunk—why, pull that thought out further. Imagine him coming home every night nearly passed out, pissing on the stairs in front of everyone, with Mrs. Zimmerman moaning that she shouldn't have married him and wished that he were dead. A fairy tale—the start of a fairy tale. Get it?

Gina stared at me, then she yelled at Baby Hugh to get away from the door, then the other two came in wanting

cookies, and Big Hugh shouted from the bedroom that we must all shut up or he couldn't sleep.

So I had to be content with movie magazines and local tales. It's true that sometimes, unasked, my Aunt Beulah would read her letters out loud; they contained gossip, but who knew the people? Achbend's divorce, Tilmo's self-hatred, the explosive nature of Gottbaum. Leah might nod. But too many details were missing for me.

Even real gossip had to be changed sometimes. What's true isn't necessarily believed. For instance, one night I saw two people making love across the street on the roof. If they had been on the flat part, I might not have seen them, but they spread a blanket on the slanted side. They were up there with most of their clothes off—body shadows with the moon in its fourth quarter and with the low orange glow from the street light. The man was more indistinct, but the woman I saw clearly. I knew both of them. But who would believe the story—that I stood at the window of my own darkened bedroom bold as a lark and watched at ease? So I changed it—I stuck the man and woman in a car parked behind



"And which regional cuisine would you be interested in this evening—Northwestern, Southwestern, Southeastern, or Northeastern?"



"Well, this is a very impressive résumé, young man. I think you're going to make a fine patient."

polkas. Guests shouted requests. Do "The Four-Eyed Beggar"! Play "Catherine's Crawl"! Everyone tapping, swaying, whistling.

At the far end of the hall Elizabeth's mother sat fanning herself with a paper napkin, her cheeks glowing, her dress pink, her hair an upsweep of rolls and curls. The bride stood nearby in a white lace dress that stopped, unreasonably, above her fat ankles. The bridegroom was on the floor dancing first with this woman, then with that.

I finished my glass of beer, licked the streak of foam from the rim. I was trying to put it all in memory—who danced, who sat, who laughed—but each impression began to chew up the last until it was all crowd and music. Nothing to cling to. And later, with Gina, there would be a quiz.

I saw Elizabeth. I could see her clearly, standing alone by the platform. I ought to speak to her. Anyway, it would give me something to do.

Many congratulations, I said. Elizabeth smiled back, her lipstick smeared from too many kisses. She plucked impatiently at her bodice, wrinkled and snug against her body.

Want to see the rings? she said and held out her hand.

Glass-bright glitter beneath my nose.

Much happiness, I said. They're gorgeous.

Elizabeth giggled, quickly looked around. His cousins, she whispered, are mad as hell.

The music rolled to a stop. Wait, Elizabeth said, her hand on my arm, and she called out to her butcher. You know Cissie, she said.

Ah, the butcher said. Come dance with me, Cissie.

Go on, Elizabeth said, encouraging me. I've slid my shoes off—be a half hour before I'll be able to get them back on.

I couldn't refuse. The butcher had me, he moved me, he twirled me. I hadn't seen him up close for years. In my thoughts I had given him rheumy eyes, coarsely shaven skin, hanging flesh. I had spared him nothing. But the truth was that he didn't look so bad, not so old, not so fat. Had he been someone else once? His shoulders were straight and firm.

Dancing, he whispered to me, is an art. The secret is all in the concentration. He bounced me forward. He certainly had plenty of energy. How well did he know Elizabeth?

Round and round the butcher led

me, and when the accordion signalled with a crashing chord the end of that dance, the butcher bowed—not a courtly bow but a flashy Arthur Murray bow.

He had worn me out. I found an empty chair, my chest heaving and the sound of seashore waves in my ears. I focussed on old landmarks—the blistering paint, the ceiling cracks, the striations in the third glass globe that swayed from its chain.

Where was the butcher? The butcher was back on the floor with someone wearing a long black velvet dress—a heavy-breasted woman, a genuine Valkyrie.

I was hungry. I went over to the tables and filled a plate with pink sausage and purple cabbage, added sharp mustard and a hunk of sour rye bread. How good it all tasted!

Toasts! It was a drinker's shout, immediately picked up by others. Toasts! Toasts! They chanted. Trays of glasses filled with wine were passed. I took a glass.

To the bride and groom! To happiness! To long life! To forever and ever!

The bride and groom were pushed forward. My father was right. This was life. I stood up on my chair, balancing carefully in my new shoes, my tiny heels. What did I see? I saw the butcher's hand move down Elizabeth's back, saw his fingers squeeze one buttock, pinching the lace dress, before moving upward again. Bride and groom climbed the three steps leading to the platform. The band played a piece romantic with vibrato.

The butcher waved at the crowd with one arm as the other now curved across Elizabeth's shoulders and pulled her close. How fit the butcher seemed, how young, and Elizabeth, standing next to him in her tight white dress, her curls still fresh from yesterday's perm, raised her hand in enthusiastic acknowledgment of all those good wishes.

—BETTE PESETSKY

TWO MEN

I MET the first man as I was going home from a dance at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Hall. I was being taken out of the dance by my two good friends. I had forgotten my friends had come with me, but there they were. Once again, I hated the two of them. The three of us had formed a group based on something erroneous, some basic misunderstanding that hadn't yet come to light, and so we kept on in one another's company, going to bars and having conversations. Generally one of these false coalitions died after a day or a day and a half, but this one had lasted more than a year. Later on, one of us got hurt when we were burglarizing a pharmacy, and the two others dropped him bleeding at the back entrance of a hospital and he was arrested and all the bonds were dissolved. We bailed him out later, and still later all the charges against him were dropped, but we'd torn open our chests and shown our cowardly hearts, and you can never stay friends after something like that.

This evening at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Hall I'd backed a woman up behind the huge air-conditioning unit while we were dancing, and I kissed her and unbuttoned her pants and put my hand down the front of them. She'd been married to a friend of mine until about a year before, and I'd always thought we'd probably get mixed up together, but her boyfriend, a mean, skinny, intelligent man who I happened to feel inferior to, came around the corner of the machine and glowered at us and told her to go out and get in the car. I was afraid he'd take some kind of action, but he disappeared just as quickly as she did. The rest of the evening I wondered, every second, if he would come back with some friends and make something painful and degrading happen. I was carrying a gun, but it wasn't as if I would actually have used it. It was so cheap I was sure it would explode in my hand if I ever pulled the trigger. So it could only add to my humiliation. Afterward people, usually men talking to women, in my imagination would say, "He had a gun, but he never even took it out of his pants." I drank as much as I could until the Western combo stopped singing and playing and the lights came up.

My two friends and I went to get into my little green Volkswagen, and we discovered the man I started to tell you about sleeping deeply in the back seat.

"Who's this?" I asked my friends. But they'd never seen him before, either.

We got him awake, and he sat up. He was something of a hulk, not so tall that his head hit the roof, but really broad, with a thick face and close-cropped hair. He wouldn't get out of the car.

This man pointed to his ears and to his mouth, signalling that he couldn't hear or talk.

"What do you do in a situation like this?" I said.

"Well, I'm getting in. Move over," Tom said to the man, and got in the back seat with him.

Richard and I got in the front. We all three turned to the new companion.

He pointed straight ahead and then laid his cheek on his hands indicating beddy-bye. "He just wants a ride home," I guessed.

"So?" Tom said. "Give him a ride home." Tom had such sharp features that his moods looked even worse than they were.

Using sign language, the passenger showed us where to take him. Tom relayed the directions, because I couldn't see the man while I was driving. "Take a right—a left here—he wants you to slow down—he's looking for the place" and like that.

We drove with the windows down. The mild spring evening, after several frozen winter months, was like a foreigner breathing in our faces. We took our passenger to a residential street where the buds were forcing themselves out of the tips of branches and the seeds were turning over in the gardens.

He was as bulky as an ape, we saw when he was out of the car, and dan-



"We should get out to the country more often."

THE BOX TURTLE

Long-lived, repository of memory; secretive,
not outgoing, the turtle, knowledgeable of
inner regions—*terra anima*, terraqueous—
gives its heart once, and not far.

Slow-moving under the salmon snapdragons,
the cucumber's umbrella leaves, the
raspberries' jewelled Palace of the Doges,
this summer's box turtle sunning on

the flagstones is last summer's same Trojan,
its head a thumb on the ground's warm
throb, testing for action, for salinity,
for how our incursions should deflect his

or her dependable intentions. It is
only we who think of change. Beauty's gaze
has no new eye; its inverse is
not ugliness but shame: the turtle

unnamed but for description recoils only
as encroached on. Its belly markings shadowy,

once exactly handprint-size; the garden prince,
at first love, aged five—one hand

good enough for counting, one turtle
consort—who now despairs of finding ever again
the very same calciferous hide, calling
its name, "Turtle," in the compost.

Not a stir. Tristan, last year's boy,
scans from inside this year's whistling and
contracting boreal signs, and the turtle
wished on as a circumscriber is

in hiding. We know the boy is the same,
and not the same. We know the zenith sun
has its own sequestered dark spots; that
the world is tigrish, like a *débutante*

looking both to stay and quick be gone—hesitant,
empyrean—that the turtle's stately box step
cuts in, and keeps one dancing, *terra*
a terra, in the same bright circle.

—CYNTHIA ZARIN

gled his hands as if he might suddenly
go down and start walking on his
knuckles. He glided up the walk of one
particular house and banged on the
door. A light went on in the second
story, the curtain moved, and the light
went out. He was back at the car,
thumping on the roof with his hand,
before I got the thing in gear to pull
away and leave him.

He draped himself over the front of
my VW and seemed to pass out.

"Wrong house maybe," Richard
suggested.

"I can't navigate with him like
that," I said.

"Take off," Richard suggested,
"and slam on the brakes."

"The brakes aren't working," Tom
told Richard.

"The emergency brake works," I
assured everybody.

Tom had no patience. "All you have
to do is move this car and he'll fall off."

"I don't want to hurt him."

We ended it by helping him into the
back seat, where he slumped against
the window.

Now we were stuck with him again.
Tom laughed sarcastically. We all
three lit cigarettes.

"Here comes Caplan to shoot off my
legs," I said, looking in terror at a car
as it came around the corner and then

passed by. "I was sure it was him," I
said as its tail-lights disappeared down
the block.

"Are you still all worried about Le-
titia?" Tom said.

"I was kissing her."

"There's no law against that,"
Richard said.

"It's not her lawyer I'm worried
about."

"I don't think Caplan's that serious
about her. Not enough to kill you or
anything like that."

"What do you think about all this?"
I asked our drunken buddy.

He started snoring ostentatiously.

"This guy isn't really deaf—are
you, hey?" Tom said.

"What do we do with him?"

"Take him home with us."

"Not me," I said.

"One of us should, anyway."

"He lives right there," I insisted.
"You could tell by the way he
knocked."

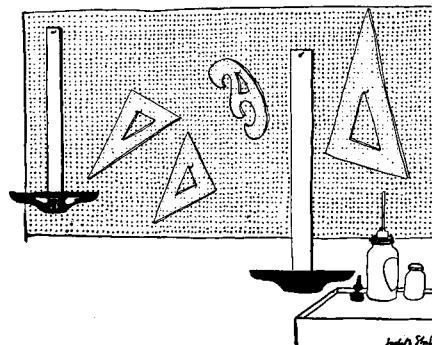
I got out of the car. I went to the
house and rang the doorbell and
stepped back off the porch, looking up
at the overhead window in the dark.
The white curtain moved again, and a
woman said something.

All of her was invisible except the
shadow of her hand on the curtain's
border. "If you don't take him off our
street I'm calling the police," she said.
I was so flooded with yearning I
thought it would drown me. Her voice
broke off and floated down. "I've got
the phone now. Now I'm dialling,"
she called down softly.

I thought I heard a car's engine
somewhere not too far away. I ran back
to the street.

"What is it?" Richard said as I got
in.

Headlights came around the corner.
A spasm ran through me so hard it
shook the car. "Jesus," I said. The
interior filled up with light so that for
two seconds you could have read a
book. The shadows of dust streaks on
the windshield striped Tom's face.
"It's nobody," Richard said, and the
dark closed up again as whoever it was
went past. "Caplan doesn't know
where you are anyway."



The jolt of fear had burned all the red out of my blood. I was like rubber. "I'll go after him, then. Let's just have it out."

"Maybe he doesn't care, or—I don't know. What do I know?" Tom said. "Why are we even talking about him?"

"Maybe he forgives you," Richard said.

"Oh, God, if he does, then we're comrades and so on forever." I said. "All I'm asking is just punish me and get it over with."

The passenger wasn't defeated. He gestured all over the place, touching his forehead and his armpits and gyrating in place like a baseball coach signalling his players. "Look," I said. "I know you can talk. Don't act like we're stupid."

HE directed us through this part of town and then over near the train tracks, where hardly anybody lived. Here and there were shacks with dim lights inside them, sunk to the bottom of all this darkness. But the house he had me stop in front of got no light except from the street lamp. Nothing happened when I honked the horn. The man we were helping just sat there. All this time he'd voiced plenty of desires but hadn't said a word. More and more he began to seem like somebody's dog.

"I'll take a look," I told him, making my voice cruel.

It was a small wooden house with two posts for a clothesline out front. The grass had grown up and been crushed by the snows and then uncovered by the thaw. Without bothering to knock I went around to the window and looked in. There was one chair all by itself at an oval table. The house looked abandoned—no curtains, no rugs. All over the floor there were shiny things I thought might be spent flashbulbs or empty bullet casings. But it was dark and nothing was clear. I

TOP-ECHELON SHAKEUP: ZUBIN MEHTA TO CHRYSLER, LEE IACocca TO THE PHILHARMONIC



peered around until my eyes were tired, and I thought I could make out designs all over the floor like the chalk outlines of victims or markings for strange rituals.

"Why don't you go in there?" I asked the guy when I got back to the car. "Just go look. You faker, you loser."

He held up one finger.

"What?"

One. One.

"He wants to go one more place," Richard said.

"We already went one more place. This place right here. And it was just bogus."

"What do you want to do?" Tom said.

"Oh, let's just take him wherever he wants to go." I didn't want to go home. My wife was different now, and we had a six-month-old baby I was afraid of, a little son.

The next place we took him to stood all by itself out on the Old Highway. I'd been out this road more than once, a little farther every time, and I'd never found anything that made me happy. Some of my friends had had a farm out here, but the police had raided the place and put them all in jail.

This house didn't seem to be part of a farm. It was about two-tenths of a mile off the Old Highway, its front porch edged right up against the road. When we stopped in front of it and turned off the engine, we heard music coming from inside—jazz. It sounded sophisticated and lonely.

We all went up to the porch together with the silent man. He knocked on the door. Tom, Richard, and I flanked him at a slight, a very subtle distance.

As soon as the door opened, he pushed his way inside. We followed him in and stopped, but he headed right into the next room.

We didn't get any farther inside than the kitchen. The next room past that was dim and blue-lit, and inside it, through the doorway, we saw a loft, almost a gigantic bunk bed, in which several ghost-complected women were lying around. One just like those came through the door from that room and stood looking at the three of us with her mascara blurred and her lipstick kissed away. She wore a skirt but not a blouse, just a white bra, like someone in an undie ad in a teen-age magazine. But she was older than that. Looking at her, I thought of going out in the fields with my wife back when we were

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come into this?



Why do you call it "vanilla pudding"?



n. Chant

so in love we didn't know what it was.

She wiped her nose, a sleepy gesture. Inside of two seconds she was closely attended by a black man slapping the palm of his hand with a pair of gloves, a very large man looking blindly down at me with the invulnerable smile of someone on dope.

The young woman said, "If you'd called ahead, we would've encouraged you not to bring him."

Her companion was delighted. "That's a beautiful way of saying it."

In the room behind her, the man we'd brought stood like a bad sculpture, posing unnaturally with his

shoulders wilting, as if he couldn't lug his gigantic hands any farther.

"What the hell is his problem?" Richard asked.

"It doesn't matter what his problem is until he's fully understood it himself," the man said.

Tom laughed, in a way.

"What does he do?" Richard asked the girl.

"He's a real good football player. Or anyhow he was." Her face was tired. She couldn't have cared less.

"He's still good. He's still on the team," the black man said.

"He's not even in school."

"But he could get back on the team if he was."

"But he'll never be in school because he's fucked, man. And so are you."

He flicked one of his gloves back and forth. "I know that now, thank you, baby."

"You dropped your other glove," she said.

"Thank you, babe, but I know that, too," he said.

A big muscular boy with fresh cheeks and a blond flattop came over and joined us. I felt he was the host, because he gripped the handle of a green beer mug almost the size of a wastepaper basket with a swastika and a dollar sign painted on it. This personalized touch made him seem right at home, like Hugh Hefner circulating around the Playboy cocktail parties in his pajamas. He smiled at me and shook his head. "He can't stay. Tammy doesn't want him here."

"O.K., whoever Tammy is," I said. Around these strange people I felt hungry. I smelled some kind of debauchery, the whiff of a potion that would banish everything plaguing me.

"Now would be a good time to take him out of here," the big host said.

"What's his name, anyway?"

"Stan."

"Stan. Is he really deaf?"

The girl snorted.

The boy laughed and said, "That's a good one."

Richard punched my arm and glanced at the door, indicating we should go. I realized that he and Tom were afraid of these people, and then I was, too. Not that they'd do anything to us, but around them we felt almost like stupid failures.

The woman hurt me. She looked so soft and perfect, like a mannequin made of flesh—flesh all the way through.

"Let's ditch him—right now," I cried, hurrying out the door.

I was already in the driver's seat, and Tom and Richard were halfway down the walk, before Stan came out the door. "Lose him! Lose him!" Tom yelled, getting in after Richard, but the man already had a grip on the door handle by the time I'd started pulling away.

I goosed it, but he wouldn't give up. He even managed to keep a slight lead



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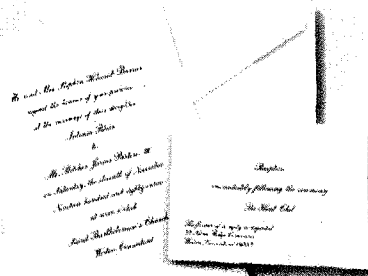
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and look around right at me through the front window, keeping up a psychotic eye contact and wearing a sarcastic smile, as if to say he'd be with us forever, running faster and faster, puffing out clouds of breath. After fifty yards, as we neared the stop sign at the main road, I really gunned it, hoping to wrench free, but all I did was yank him right into the stop sign. His head hit it first, and the post broke off like a green stalk and he fell, sprawling all over it. The wood must have been rotten. Lucky for him.

We left him behind, a man staggering around a crossroads

where a stop sign used to stand. "I thought I knew everyone in town," Tom said, "but those people are completely new to me."

"They used to be jocks, but now they're heads," Richard said.

"Football people. I didn't know they ever got like that." Tom was looking backward, down the road.

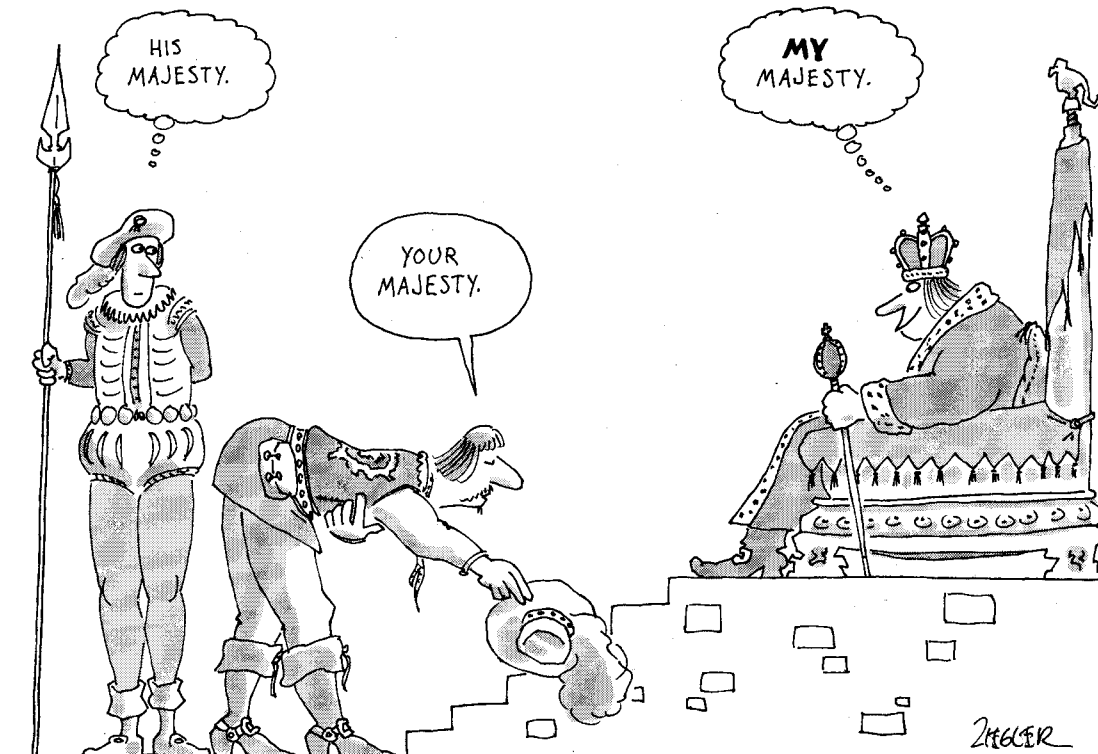
I stopped the car, and we all looked back. A quarter mile behind us, Stan paused among the fields in the starlight, in the posture of somebody who either had a pounding hangover or was trying to fit his head back onto his neck. But it wasn't just his head, it was all of him that had been cut off and thrown away. No wonder he didn't hear or speak, no wonder he didn't have anything to do with words. Everything along those lines was used up.

We stared at him and felt like old maids. He, on the other hand, was the bride of Death.

We took off. "Never got him to say a word."

All the way back to town, Tom and I criticized him.

"You just don't realize. Being a cheerleader, being on the team, it doesn't guarantee anything. Anybody can take a turn for the worse," said



Richard, who'd been a high-school quarterback or something himself.

AS soon as we hit the city limits, where the chain of street lamps began, I was back to wondering about and fearing Caplan.

"I'd better just go after him, instead of waiting," I suggested to Tom.

"Who?"

"Who do you think?"

"Will you forget it? It's over. Seriously."

"Yeah. O.K., O.K."

We drove up Benton Street. We passed the all-night gas station at the corner of Clinton. A man was handing money to the attendant, both of them standing by his car in an eerie sulfur light—those sodium-arc lamps were new in our town then—and the pavement around them was spangled with oil stains that looked green, while his old Ford was no color at all. "You know who that was?" I told Tom and Richard. "That was Thatcher."

I made a U-turn as quickly as I could.

"So what?" Tom said.

"So this," I said, producing the .32 I'd never fired.

Richard laughed, I don't know why.

Tom laid his hands on his knees and sighed.

Thatcher was back in his car by this time. I pulled up to the pumps going the other direction, and rolled down my window. "I bought one of those phony kilos you were selling for two ten right around last New Year's. You don't know me, because what's-his-name was selling them for you." I doubt he heard me. I showed him the pistol.

Thatcher's tires gave a yip as he took off in his corroded Falcon. I didn't think I'd catch him in the VW, but I spun it around after him. "The stuff he sold me was a burn," I said.

"Didn't you try it first?" Richard said.

"It was weird stuff."

"Well, if you tried it," he said.

"It seemed all right, and then it wasn't. It wasn't just me. Everybody else said so, too."

"He's losing you." Thatcher had hooked very suddenly between two buildings.

I couldn't find him as we exited the alley onto another street. But up ahead I saw a patch of old snow go pink in somebody's brake lights.

"He's turned that corner," I said.

When we rounded the building we



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found his car parked, empty, in back of an apartment house. A light went on in one of the apartments, and then went off.

"I'm two seconds behind him." The feeling that he was afraid of me was invigorating. I left the VW in the middle of the parking lot with the door open and the engine on and the headlights burning.

Tom and Richard were behind me as I ran up the first flight of stairs and banged on the door with the gun. I knew I was in the right place. I banged again. A woman in a white nightgown opened it, backing away and saying, "Don't. All right. All right. All right."

"Thatcher must have told you to answer, or you never would've opened the door," I said.

"Jim? He's out of town." She had long black hair in a ponytail. Her eyeballs were positively shaking in her head.

"Get him," I said.

"He's in California."

"He's in the bedroom." I backed her up, moving toward her behind the mouth of the gun.

"I've got two kids here," she begged.

"I don't care! Get on the floor!"

She got down, and I pushed the side of her face into the rug and laid the gun against her temple.

Thatcher was going to come out, or I didn't know what. "I've got her on the floor in here!" I called back toward the bedroom.

"My kids are sleeping," she said. The tears ran out of her eye and over the bridge of her nose.

Suddenly and stupidly, Richard walked right back into the bedroom. Flagrant, self-destructive gestures—he was known for them.

"There's nobody back here but two little kids."

Tom joined him. "He climbed out the window," he called back to me.

I took two steps over to the living-room window and looked down onto the parking lot. I couldn't tell for certain, but it looked like Thatcher's car was gone.

The woman hadn't moved. She just lay there on the rug. "He's really not here," she said.

I knew he wasn't. "I don't care. You're going to be sorry," I said.

—DENIS JOHNSON

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PROFILES

THE CASUALNESS OF IT

HERE is how the comedian Jackie Mason ended his one-man show at the Brooks Atkinson on a Saturday night in January, 1987. "I never thought I'd be a comedian," he said. "Who expected it when you come from a family of rabbis? I have three brothers who are rabbis to this day, and my father all his life was a rabbi. Everybody was a rabbi in the ancestry of my family. So when my father looked at me as his fourth son, naturally he waited for me to become a rabbi and I wanted to make him proud by following in his footsteps, and I started to deliver sermons, and as I was delivering the sermons I didn't feel honest, so I started to tell a few jokes here and there to make it more palatable for myself, and as the jokes were getting better and better I started to charge a cover and a minimum, and then, as the Gentiles in the area heard about me, more and more Gentiles came to see me. So many Gentiles came that before you knew it there was no room for the Jews. The Jews couldn't get in there. I became the only rabbi with a Gentile congregation." This classic Mason mixture of truth and hyperbole was delivered in his customary medium-heavy Yiddish accent, at high speed, yet conversationally, with a steady underlying chuckle (not always audible in the audience but visible in the half smiles that ducked continually across his face), and with a freshness that belied the twelve hours of monologue he had already delivered on Broadway that week. Mason is short and solid, and affects an international look—well-cut double-breasted blazers, gray pants, and conservative shirts and ties. He has receding, curly grayish hair, alert eyebrows, small Gladstones, and sad, questioning eyes. He is a nim-



ble, flyaway presence onstage. He semaphores a lot with his hands and arms, and during part of the show becomes a frenzied fencer, underlining what he is saying by cutting and slashing the air with a teacher's long pointer. He is a surpassing mimic. Using a guttural mumble, which somehow flawlessly catches his subjects' speech, he mimics their gaits and postures and mannerisms, and there, floating insanely around the stage, are Al Jolson and Bing Crosby and Alfred Hitchcock and Jimmy Cagney. Mason's masterpiece is Ed Sullivan. For several minutes, he pedals rapidly across the stage, sometimes moving forward, sometimes backward, sometimes in a circle, all the while pounding his chest with a fist, or wringing his hands, cardboarding his shoulders, shooting his head out, and gradually moving faster and faster until he suddenly rockets off the stage. It is contagious rampaging Surrealism. It immediately lifts his show from its purported level of Catskills comedy (which it has never been on anyway) to that giddy plane where W. C. Fields and the Marx Brothers sport.

Mason rarely stops talking. He talks

as easily and steadily offstage as on. Talking is breathing and exercise and thinking for him. It flexes and exhilarates him, emptying his head and filling it again. It distills what he sees and hears. One day not long ago, he talked about himself and how he got to Broadway. He was seated on a hard reproduction-Chinese chair in his ecstatically decorated Murray Hill apartment—gold ceilings, gold wallpaper covered with huge black-and-white flamingos, black furniture, a lot of mirrors, and gold vertical blinds. Mason looked like a sparrow in the Everglades. While he

talked, he knitted the hair on the back of his head with his fingers, explaining that such fingerwork helps him concentrate. In the manner of most theatrical performers, who tend to look in more often than out, he kept his eyes half closed.

"My friend Jyll Rosenfeld took me to see a one-man show that Dick Shawn was doing on the Coast," he said. "She had helped me raise money for one of my movies, and she had become my manager. Her grandfather owned movie theatres; her father is a movie distributor. After we'd seen Dick Shawn, she said, 'Why don't we take your show on Broadway?' I said, 'Don't be ridiculous. How can a nightclub comedian go on Broadway? My accent would automatically make it lowbrow. They'd write me off as a borscht-belt comedian. If I were a black man with an English accent, they'd think it was profound. But I'm a street-corner character, and Broadway audiences have a hoi-polloi attitude.' Jyll said that it should be a production—have a map on the wall, develop gadgets and gimmicks, call it something like 'The World According to Me.' She said on a Broadway stage I'd

look like an art form, because they'd never seen a character like me. I said, 'I don't believe any of it, but I'll go along with it. There's a one-per-cent chance it will work.' I got together with a West Coast playwright and he came up with some ideas—have some books onstage, have some chairs, have a wind when I did my weather-forecasting routine. All this would make the production look like something else than a monologue. We opened the show that way at the Las Palmas Theatre in Los Angeles in June of 1986, and after a week I knew it stunk. My style is the casualness of it—just a friend telling his insights about life, about the world. The way we were doing it, it made me an actor. I was doing a role instead of working from the heart. I kept the map and the globe and the locater, but I threw the rest of the affectations out. I started doing the show as a monologist. I started taking my chances by being myself, and I was afraid it would die. But suddenly it was sensational. Mel Brooks, George Burns, Jane Fonda, Milton Berle, Jimmy Stewart, Kirk Douglas, Alan Alda—everybody came to see me. We

moved to the Canon Theatre in Beverly Hills, and Nick Vanoff became a partner. He was excited about taking the show to Broadway. But I still wasn't sure. I had worked at Dangerfield's in New York for four or five years and hadn't been a huge hit, so why would I be a huge hit ten blocks away? We opened on Broadway in December of 1986, and closed a year later so I could go to the Coast and make 'Caddyshack II.' We reopened in May of this year. And I'm a star. Just like that." (He is also, like many besieged stars before him, involved in a paternity suit, which has gone against him but which he is appealing.)

"I first worked in night clubs in 1961," he said. "When I decided to move out from the hotels and bar mitzvahs I had been doing, the bookers told me that I was too Jewish, that even if the Gentiles could understand what I said with my accent they wouldn't like me. I began to realize that what these bookers were doing was transferring their persecution complexes to me. They were putting their guilt, their paranoia, on me. I got a booking in a club in Los Angeles called the Slate

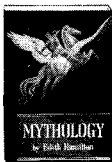
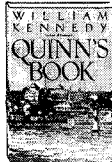
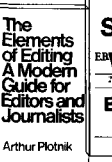
Brothers. It was like the Blue Angel in New York—very hip, very smart. The exact opposite of what the bookers feared happened. The audience loved every word I said. I was a smash in five minutes. Then Bill Dana and Jan Murray, who knew Steve Allen, came in, and they got me an audition with Allen. When I arrived at the studio, it was the usual television-studio scene—three people doing something, four people almost doing something, ten people watching them, twelve people looking lost, and thirty people just standing around. I told one joke, and Allen said, 'He's hilarious.' As soon as he said that, my heart dropped. Being on TV was remote and frightening to me. The first show I did with Allen, I was so nervous I didn't even hear myself. I was talking by rote. I didn't know if I did good or bad. I didn't hear any laughs. After, I was bombarded with calls from New York. 'Brilliant!' 'Great!' I went back to the show two weeks later, and I was a big hit again. I went from three hundred to five thousand dollars a week. I went into the Copa as the opening act for Connie Francis. I did Jack Paar and Garry



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Moore and Ed Sullivan. I became a regular on the Sullivan show.

"Then came the famous finger episode. It was 1964. The show was being cut short that night, because President Lyndon Johnson was making a speech. Sullivan held up two fingers to warn me I had two minutes left, and I held up a hand mimicking him, but, the way I did it, it looked like I was giving him the finger. My God, I was only a few years out of being a rabbi. I didn't even know what such a gesture meant. I had never used dirty jokes or bad language. I still don't. There was an uproar, and Sullivan dropped me. I was suddenly considered obnoxious, arrogant, vulgar, unstable, abnormal. It was a classic instance of being railroaded beyond reparation. I sued Sullivan for breach of contract and defamation of character. Paul O'Dwyer was my lawyer. He was a righteous man, a man of principle. We would have won the case, but my booking agency persuaded me to settle out of court. They argued that it was wrong to win out over Ed Sullivan. He was a national hero, as American as apple pie. It was a stupid decision. You settle out of court, who

knows who wins? A fight is fascinating; shaking hands is not. A year later, I ran into Sullivan at the airport, and he apologized. He had studied the films. He had me back on his show, and he apologized on the air. But it served no purpose. The rumor had been built—I was a dirty comedian. My price didn't go down. I still worked the big clubs. People like Merv Griffin were still crazy about me. But it came to me that I was losing certain jobs because of my reputation. I didn't sense myself becoming a major comedian. I was a name, not a star. I still made a good dollar, but not the top dollar.

"In 1969, I did a play on Broadway. I worked on it for six months. Mike Mortman helped me. He was my sounding board, and he knew about writing plays. I ran around and raised money, including my own. The play was called 'A Teaspoon Every Four Hours.' It must have had the longest preview run in Broadway history—ninety-seven performances. After every performance, I came out and asked for opinions from the audience. They loved that. It made them feel like philosophers. I also promoted the play on

every TV show I did. All this convinced me I had a big hit. The show opened and closed in one day. The critics said it was the worst crap they ever saw. Where does this schlemiel get the idea he's an actor and a playwright? He should go into a different business. And so on. It didn't make me feel too good. But I told myself that life is too short, that you have to keep moving, that you're lucky to be on earth in the position you're in. I don't even have a copy of the play. But I'm looking for one. It might make a good movie."

Mason laughed. "I wish I knew what a good movie is," he said. "I made my first one, called 'The Stoolie,' not long after the Broadway disaster. People who did 'They Shoot Horses, Don't They?' and 'The Karate Kid' were involved. I didn't like the script much, but I thought it would create a new aura around me. It would be like Red Buttons in 'Sayonara' and Sinatra in 'From Here to Eternity.' It would send shock waves through the country. It opened, and the critics loved it. But nobody came, and the picture died.

"Then I did a TV pilot for a kind of



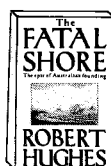
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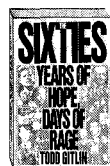
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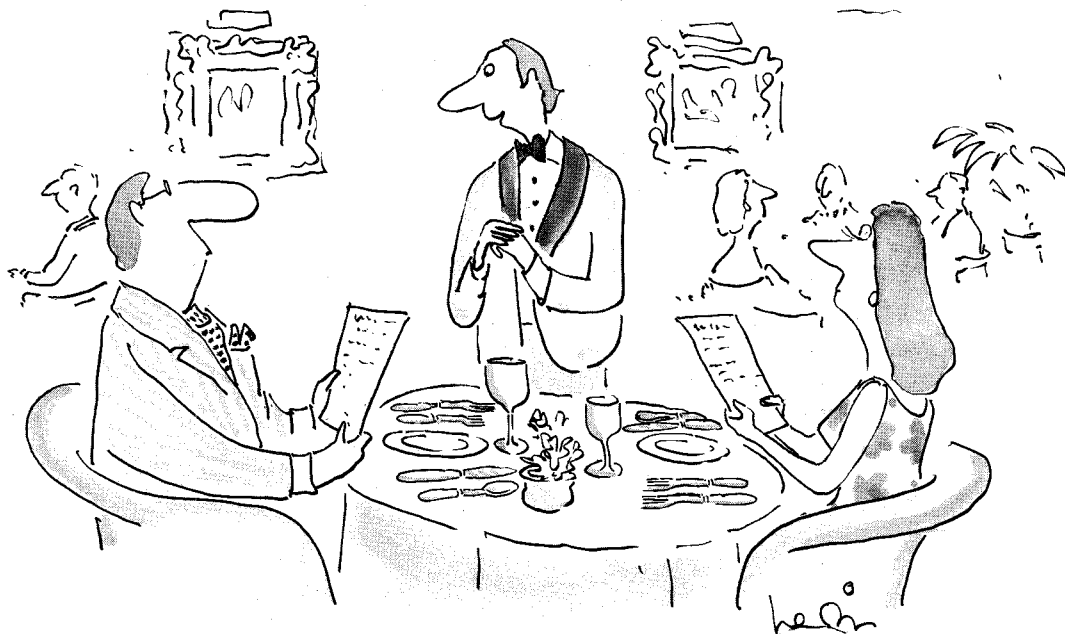
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comedy Phil Donahue show, but I could see in the producers' faces that they couldn't care less. They always had some excuse—the curtain is crooked, there are too many shadows in the picture, the people are too old, too thin, too fat. So that went nowhere. The next movie I tried was about a deli owner who looks like a famous atomic scientist. 'A Stroke of Genius,' it's called. I acted in it, and I put in a million three of my own money. The picture stunk, the execution stunk. My intelligence seemed to have a hole in it. Everything I did was caving in. I felt that something was wrong, something was off kilter. I lost some confidence in myself. We reshot it, and it was somewhat better. But it's still in the can. An old friend from yeshiva, Morty Davis, offered me money to try another picture. He was my biggest fan. He'd bring his whole family into Dangerfield's, into the hotels in the mountains. He couldn't understand why I wasn't the world's biggest star. He was like an older brother. The new movie was called 'Stiffs,' and it's about three men who inherit a funeral parlor. One is Jewish, one is black, and one is Italian. I was one of the three. I worked very hard, but my lack of confidence made me let other people take over the picture. It didn't come out so hot. It had screenings. It was flat. I reshot it, and screened it again. It was still no good. And there it stands. I went bankrupt

on this picture. Before my Broadway show opened, I was broke."

MASON went into the kitchen, a dark mirrored area at the back of the living room, and poured himself a tall glass of orange juice. Then he answered half a dozen phone calls, prefacing each conversation with a fast, double-barrelled "Hellohello!" He finished talking and looked around the room. "I don't know what I need birds on the wall for," he said. "Or all this fancy furniture. I have never been interested in furniture. I told them when they picked out this apartment to fix it how they liked it. This is what they did. Can you believe it? The least they could have is a decent chair. You can do anything here but sit in a comfortable chair. People tell me these things wouldn't happen if I had a wife. I think of marriage like it's football—it's not for me. I enjoy the company of women. I like to experience different relationships. I don't like to be committed to one person. I would never be comfortable in a marriage. People forget about the freedom of choice in such situations. Marriage doesn't suit everybody. People think that everybody should be married. But most people who are shouldn't be. The contract they enter into becomes a fraud, a mockery. Eighty per cent of the men who are married cheat, and fifty or sixty per cent of the women. Very few

married people are happy. I wouldn't say I'm not lonely sometimes, but married people are often lonelier. Why are they always looking for another couple to go out with? Why is it inconceivable that they have a good time just with each other? Married men have said to me, 'What kind of life is that, living in hotels, in little rooms?' I don't get too self-involved. I never sit around immersed in myself. I like to go to the coffee shops and watch people. Every person is a book. The whole world is a performance.

"I idolized my father. I stole my whole personality from him. To me he was the greatest human being on earth. I was born Jacob Maza, in Sheboygan, in

1934. My father was a rabbi there. He and my mother and my three older brothers were born in Russia. They came over in 1930. I was the first in the family to be born here. There were three sisters after me—Susan, Gail, and Evelyn. The older brothers are Joseph and Gabriel and Bernard. All but one of my sisters and brothers live in New York or New Jersey. We are very close. My father looked like me, except for his beard. My mother was a small lady who wore housecoats and only went out to buy food. She was the traditional Jewish wife of the time, totally submissive, always preoccupied with cleaning and cooking, with following us around with soup and a piece of cake. She felt morally obligated to serve her husband and children. She and the women like her felt guilt about ever enjoying themselves. Just resting for a minute was a crime. Her name was Bella, and my father's name was Eli. They were both from Minsk.

"When my father came over from Russia, he discovered there were too many rabbis in New York—that's why he moved us to Sheboygan. Then he discovered that it was impossible to train anyone for the rabbinate in Sheboygan, so after four or five years he brought us back to New York. There had been many generations of rabbis in my family. Being a rabbi was inviolate, a heritage. It was blasphemous for us to

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think of being anything else. We moved to the Lower East Side. First to Rutgers Street, then Henry Street, then Madison. The children there spoke English to each other and Yiddish to the parents. My father put things together to make ends meet, but he had a murderous struggle. It was yesterday's bread, secondhand grapes, fourth-rate cherries. We celebrated when we had fresh fruit. My father was still a rabbi, but he also made a living from writing books. He was an interpreter of the Talmud who became a great scholar, an intellectual giant in Orthodox circles. In the halls of a place like a yeshiva, they would know what my father was. But my father never made things easy for himself. He wasn't a good politician, a diplomat. His principles were more important to him than negotiations. He had a spirited concern for the underdog. At the yeshiva, I studied Hebrew and the Talmud. The secular studies were incidental. Then I went to C.C.N.Y. I majored in psychology. I had a B.A. and a certificate to be a rabbi. My first job was in Latrobe, about thirty miles from Pittsburgh. I had a hundred and fifty people in the congregation. I already knew that being a rabbi was not what I wanted. I knew I wasn't as religious as I was supposed to be. The basic message had a severity that didn't reflect my attitudes. I'd preach against the pleasures of the earth, and a beautiful blonde would go by and I'd lose my place. But I didn't want to hurt my father. It was a great source of conflict with me. I was in Latrobe six or seven months. Then I went to Weldon, North Carolina. I was there about as long. I was beginning to feel like I was teaching people to dance when I hated dancing. It was then I made up my mind I couldn't be a hypocrite all my life, that I couldn't personify a character I wasn't.

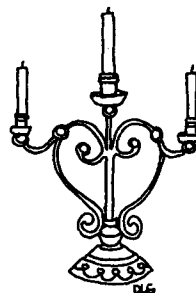
"So I went to the Catskills to be a social director. The social director in a hotel in the Catskills was supposed to be a tumbler, a noisemaker, a court jester. He was supposed to entertain. He was supposed to come up with games and diversions, with bingo nights and movie nights and calisthenics. This was based on the belief that a Jew can never rest, that as soon as a Jew does nothing he complains. All this was very uncomfortable for me. Creating such activities was like starting an earthquake. I didn't see any

sense in athletic activity. Can anything be more stupid than skiing? You leave your steam heat to go out in the cold and run up and down a mountain. A miserable experience. I worked as a social director for one season—in about six different places. The bosses would get sick of me when I didn't create enough activity, and I'd move on. But in the playhouse at night I was always a hit. I had learned when I was a rabbi that I could make people laugh. I decided I wanted to see if I could become a professional comedian. I started to play bar mitzvahs, Purim parties, Passover parties, weddings, banquets, fund-raisers—all Jewish-related events. I developed a reputation in the mountains that I was funny, and the next year I went as a comedian to the Catskills. One hundred dollars a show at the Concord Hotel. This was in 1958. With my father, I decided that compassion mattered more than the lies I told him. I created different excuses. I was on vacation, I was this, I was that. I always wore a yarmulke and a hat when I was with him. He never knew I was not a practicing rabbi. He believed me because he wanted to believe me. He was so involved in his religious life he couldn't believe anything else. He thought of me as someone who liked to joke. My brothers knew, but they saw no future for me as a comedian. The idea that someone could be a hit or famous doing what I was doing was too farfetched for them."

MASON's Broadway show has evolved steadily. He estimates that by the end of its first year a third of the first act was new and two-thirds of the second. He is not a standup comedian in the usual sense; he moves too much, and even sits down. Nor is he given to one-liners, although small jokes pop irrepressibly out of him when he is at ease offstage: "A person who speaks good English in New York sounds like a foreigner." Mason is an old-fashioned moralist. He is rarely tasteless or cruel; he is a gentle comedian, in the manner of Bob and Ray or Fred Allen, even though he sometimes shouts for emphasis and uses such flavorful words as "stink" and "bastard" and "schmuck." He constantly eavesdrops on the world around him, and when something provokes him he distills it, adds his own italics, and tries the new routine out on friends in one of

the coffee shops he hangs out in during the day. If the routine works, he may insert it in the show, and if it works there he may keep it in. If he keeps it, he will improvise on it until it wears thin, and then drop it.

Mason's show has the pacing and intensity of an old-time musical, and it is always startling to realize after fifteen minutes that there is just one person onstage. He will begin the evening by explaining that you don't need three hundred people to make a show, although that's what Broadway audiences have come to expect. One person is enough—look at Michelangelo, who painted the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel by himself, and took thirty years. After discussing people who need a lot of people, Mason describes a complex visit with a psychiatrist, whom he goes to in hopes of finding out who he is. At the end, the psychiatrist pays Mason for having found out who *he* is. Beverly Hills is next. If you hate people, it's the place to live, because you never see anybody except Japanese gardeners, who have worked there for years without knowing whom they work for. Most of the people who claim they live in Beverly Hills actually live in a place called "adjacent." Most of them also own a Mercedes, Cadillacs being regarded as embarrassing even by Cadillac owners, who claim they would never buy a car made by "those Nazi bastards." A lot of movie producers live in or near Beverly Hills, and the chances are they haven't made a picture in ten years. "All they talk about is where they are going to put the sex scene in their next movie," Mason will say. "They convince themselves that they're not interested in sex for sex's sake, but—let's be honest—since everybody does it movies should reflect reality, which is the essence of truth. [A short pause] That's what they tell you. And I keep wondering [another pause]: everybody also has soup. How come I never see soup in any movie? [His voice rising] More people have soup than sex. [He points to someone in the first couple of rows.] You look to me like you had enough sex. I can tell you're ready for soup. I never heard anybody say, 'I'm too tired, forget the soup.' Does your wife ever say, 'What a headache I got. [He shouts.] Soup is out!'"



He prefaces a section on international and political matters by pointing out that two-thirds of the world is covered with water, and do we need so much? The Gentiles do, he answers, but the Jews don't, because every Jew has a swimming pool. He goes on to say that individual Jews don't like to fight ("How many times have you heard a Jew say, 'If he says one more word, I'll . . .?'"), but the Israeli Army is so tough it could have taken the Suez Canal, except that the canal has no boardwalk. President Reagan gets his lumps. No matter the problem, Reagan jumps on a horse, eats jelly beans, and says "What happened?" and laughs: "Ha-ha! Ha-ha-ha!"

Mason has prepared the audience for the longest (and perhaps the best) part of his show, a comparative-anthropology class on the tribal customs of Jews and Gentiles. After explaining how good Gentiles are at building things and how maladroit Jews are, he continues, "A Gentile has a house to live in. A Jew has a house to show it. Why do you think a Gentile doesn't even care if his house flies away in a flood or a thunderstorm or a hurricane? Because they know in two minutes they could put up another house. They put up houses in a second. Watch the seven-o'clock news, every single day throughout the whole Midwest of this country Gentile houses are flying around. They're flying all over the country. Homes are flying, and the same Gentiles are standing there. The same ones!

"What happened to your house?"

"It left again!"

"Why do you live here?"

"Because my roots are here!"

"Where's your roots?"

"It went with the house!"

"It means nothing to them. A minute later, he has another house. Why do you think if a Jewish house gets a nick on it ten seconds later there's nineteen lawyers and fifty accountants? Because it's a different problem for a Jew. See, it's not only Jews. It sounds like I'm singling Jews out. All minorities are struggling for identity. What do you think psychologists mean when they talk about the identity crisis in this country? It's the thing that all minorities suffer from. They always feel left out. They always feel alienated. Be-



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cause they are. They're always struggling to prove how much money they got. So they have things to show you to give them an identity. Why do you think a Jew buys a boat? Does a Jew like a boat? There's no bigger schmuck on this earth than a Jew with a boat. I know five thousand Jews with boats and I never seen one Jewish boat move yet. Because a Jew hates a boat. He buys the boat to show it to you. 'That's my boat. You saw it? Good! Let's get the hell out of here!' "

He works his way through the attitude of Gentiles toward their bosses (reverence) and the attitude of Jews toward theirs (scorn); through Gentile behavior in restaurants (passive, and they always end up singing "Happy Birthday") and Jewish behavior (a Jew walks in like a partner in the business, and after he has finally found a table he likes he says, "Where is that draft coming from?"); through what Gentiles say to each other when they leave the Jackie Mason show ("Have a drink? How 'bout you? Have a drink?") and what Jews say ("Did you eat yet?").

MASON got another glass of orange juice, and talked about his material. "I write all my own stuff," he said. "I always have. I get ideas from everything I see in life. Like a guy taking twenty minutes to park his car. His wife is with him.

"Take it easy," she says. 'You're going to hit the curb.'

"I've parked here a million times," he says.

"See that, you schmuck! You scraped the tire. You ruined the tire!"

"How come I never do this when I park alone? You mix me up."

"I never said a word. But it also happens when I'm not here."

"How do you know if you're not here?"

"And so on. I'm still working that up. I'm also working on a caviar routine. I go to this millionaire's house and the first thing he offers me is caviar. He hates caviar, I hate caviar, but the first thing you know we're eating caviar. Neither of us can believe that people would eat something that tastes that bad. We both have to prove that we're caviar people, that we have the status to buy and eat caviar. And so on. Another one I'm working on has to do with foreign cars. The back seat in these cars is so small you have to be

thrown in. You have to be a contortionist, an acrobat, a four-year-old midget. Once you're in, you discover it's so narrow you have to sit sideways, and the man who owns the car tells you, 'Who says you have to sit straight in a car? You sit that way, there's no problem.' Except your knee is in your mouth, and if the car hits a bump you fly up to the third floor.

"I don't find performing too intimidating. To walk out on a stage and tell jokes, it's not that rare a trick. Collectively, people react the same way to the same material. But the environment is very important. Sometimes you get an unmanageable situation. This happened to me at a bar mitzvah in Miami a couple of years ago. I started telling jokes, but nobody was listening. The mike was only half working, and everybody was on the other side of the room, screaming. Two hundred people running with a piece of cake in one hand and a cup of coffee in the other. Bar mitzvahs used to be religious occasions, emotional occasions. They used to be touching moments in a family relationship. What did you have at your bar mitzvah? Sponge cake. Now it's: Who did you have at your bar mitzvah? Jackie Mason.

"There are differences in every audience. Some comedians are boring because they aren't in touch with the audience's mind. Onstage, it's as if you were carrying on a conversation with the audience, even though you are doing all the talking. You have to adjust to the reactions of the audience. It's an evolved awareness. Timing is a knowledge and awareness of the mood of an audience. There are performers who bully an audience. I try to involve the audience emotionally in my message. They have to believe what you're saying. You set up a basic premise, and if they are convinced of its truth it becomes a living experience to them, and they are ready to be moved by laughter. Part of being fascinating to an audience is being unpredictable. You have to make them anxious to hear what you say next.

"I'm not a fly-by-night character. My mind is too active. It has too much curiosity, too much concern about the world. My outlook on life will always make me replenish my material. I'm totally unaware of retiring. You don't see ninety-year-old bricklayers and plumbers. But you see ninety-year-old comedians." —WHITNEY BALLIETT



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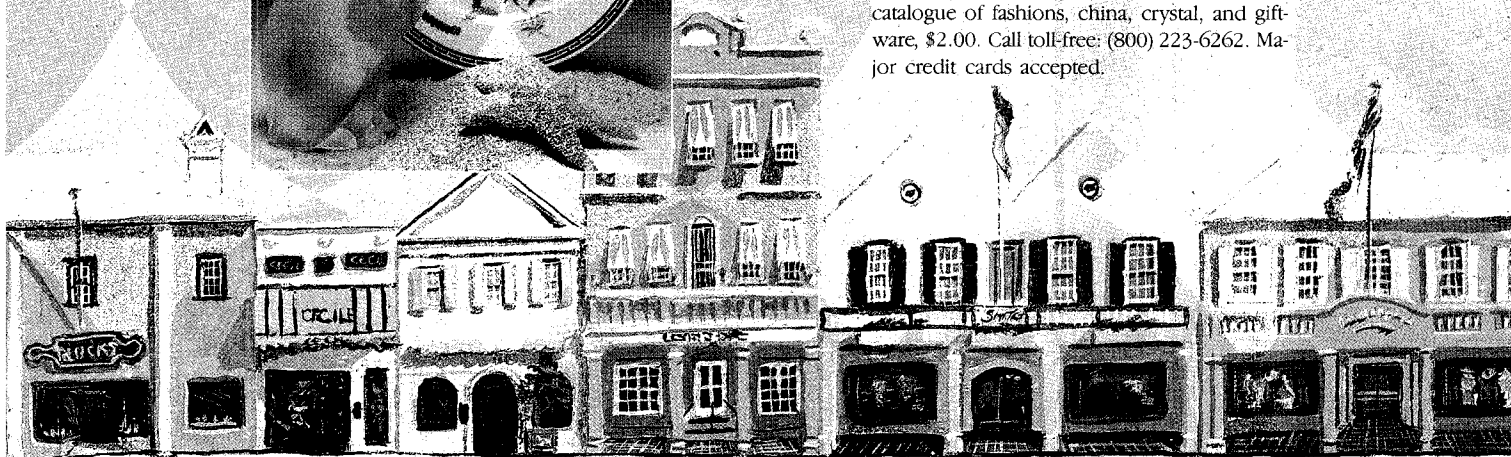
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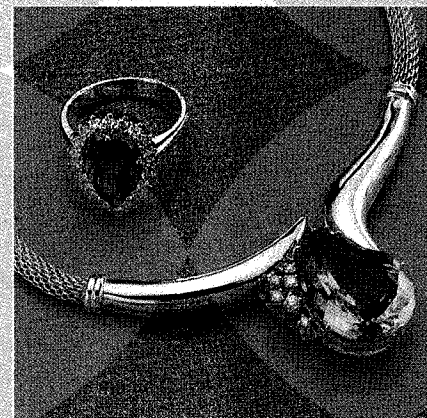


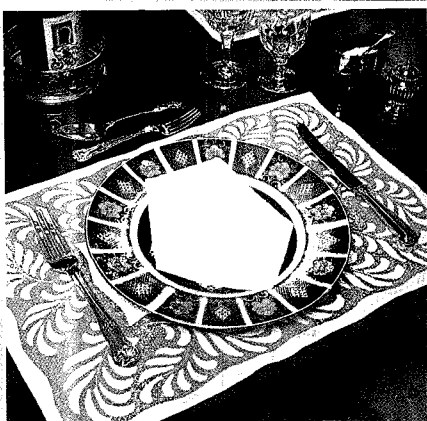
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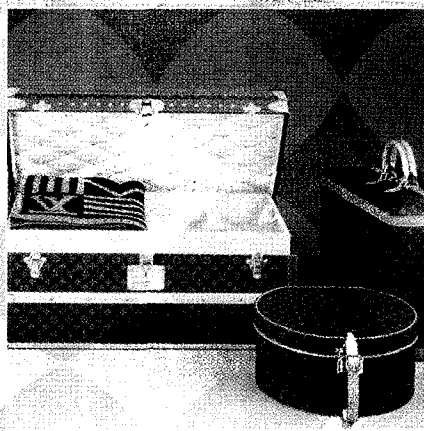
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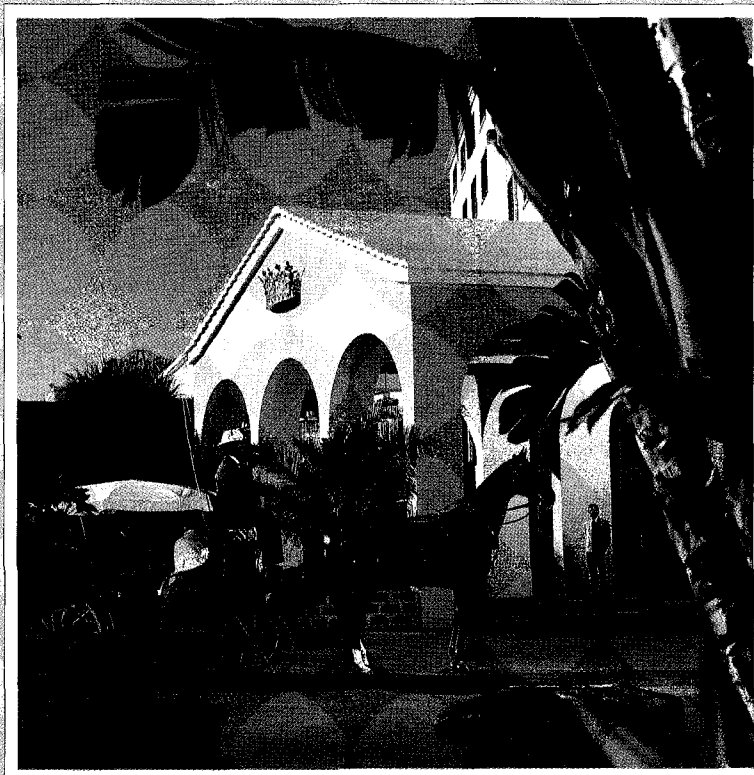
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As you might expect of a great hotel, the setting of The Princess is picture-book perfect. Overlooking Hamilton Harbour, it is a sublime vision in pink under sun and blue skies. Don't think for a moment, however, that grandeur and stateliness imply inactivity. Bermuda was an important base for Allied intelli-

gence operations during World War II, and The Princess played a considerable role. German communications were intercepted and interpreted in the basement of the hotel. James Bond would have approved of the goings-on. Quite.

The facilities of The Princess are simply world class. You have a choice of two harbourside swimming pools that are pleasantly populated but never crowded. Keep in mind that being a guest at The Princess entitles you to use of the facilities of its sister resort, the Southampton Princess. Bring golf clubs and a racquet. The golf is splendid and the tennis, splendiferous. Make tracks to the Southampton Princess's private beach club, only a scenic ferry ride away, and see for yourself that all the stories you've heard about Bermuda's pink sand and azure ocean are true.

As for dining, the choice is more than ample. One of the island's finest gourmet restaurants, the Tiara Room, serves classic French cuisine in a setting that's certain to kindle romantic impulses. The Colony Pub is another story. It will

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You may wish to explore the shops and restaurants of downtown Hamilton. Of course, legendary Front Street is but a pleasant stroll away. Fine British woollens and Irish crystal are the order of the day. The selection of wine and spirits is impressive. But whichever road you wander, there's no place like home like The Princess.

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A REPORTER AT LARGE

LARGE CARS—II

LAST fall, I rode with Lonnie Umphlett, a long-haul truck driver for Davis Transport, of Missoula, Montana, on two cross-country trips. On the first of them, after taking forty thousand pounds of milled cedar from Montana to Green Bay, Wisconsin, we picked up a load of panelling in Oshkosh and delivered it in Lodi, New Jersey, not far from New York City. Now, on a Friday morning, we were empty, and heading west through Pennsylvania.

Lonnie had been told that a load was waiting for us near Pittsburgh, but about an hour east of there we got a disturbing update from the Davis dispatcher: the load was waiting for us not in Pittsburgh but in Masury, Ohio, near Youngstown, and we would have to be there by two-thirty that afternoon, when the customer stopped loading. If we couldn't travel the hundred and twenty highway miles and who knew how many surface-street miles in two and a half hours, we would be stuck, empty, for the entire weekend.

An hour and a half later, we were a little under fifty miles from Masury, heading northwest up Interstate 79. Lonnie was looking grim and chewing antacids. For a good thirty miles, the highway had been checkerboarded with construction, squeezing traffic into a single lane or stopping it altogether. We were plagued by lumbering motor homes, loaded, slow-to-accelerate trucks, and some of the most deliberate drivers in North America. After one flagman turned his sign from "STOP" to "CAUTION," a large sedan in front of us didn't move, possibly waiting for a sign that read "Go." Lonnie—and it was the only time I saw him do this—honked his horn in impatience, the abrupt blast tearing through the quiet countryside like thunder. A crew of construction workers looked up and yelled rude things at Lonnie. I rolled my window lower and yelled even ruder things back.

"Thank you," Lonnie said. "Couldn't have said it better myself. *Come on, man!*" he said to the sedan.

Near the Ohio border, Lonnie got on the CB radio to get directions. Channel 19—the frequency monitored by truckers—was busy: two local driv-

ers, steel haulers, were talking about a third driver with serious medical problems.

"Breaker, breaker," Lonnie said. "There a hand who can tell me how to get to Masury Steel?"

Silence.

"I'm on 80 westbound, I need to get to Masury Steel. Can someone tell me how? *Come on!*"

"Masury Steel?" a voice said.

"That's right," Lonnie answered.

We got the directions. Lonnie repeated them, and the voice said, "You got it."

"'Preciate it, hand." Lonnie signed

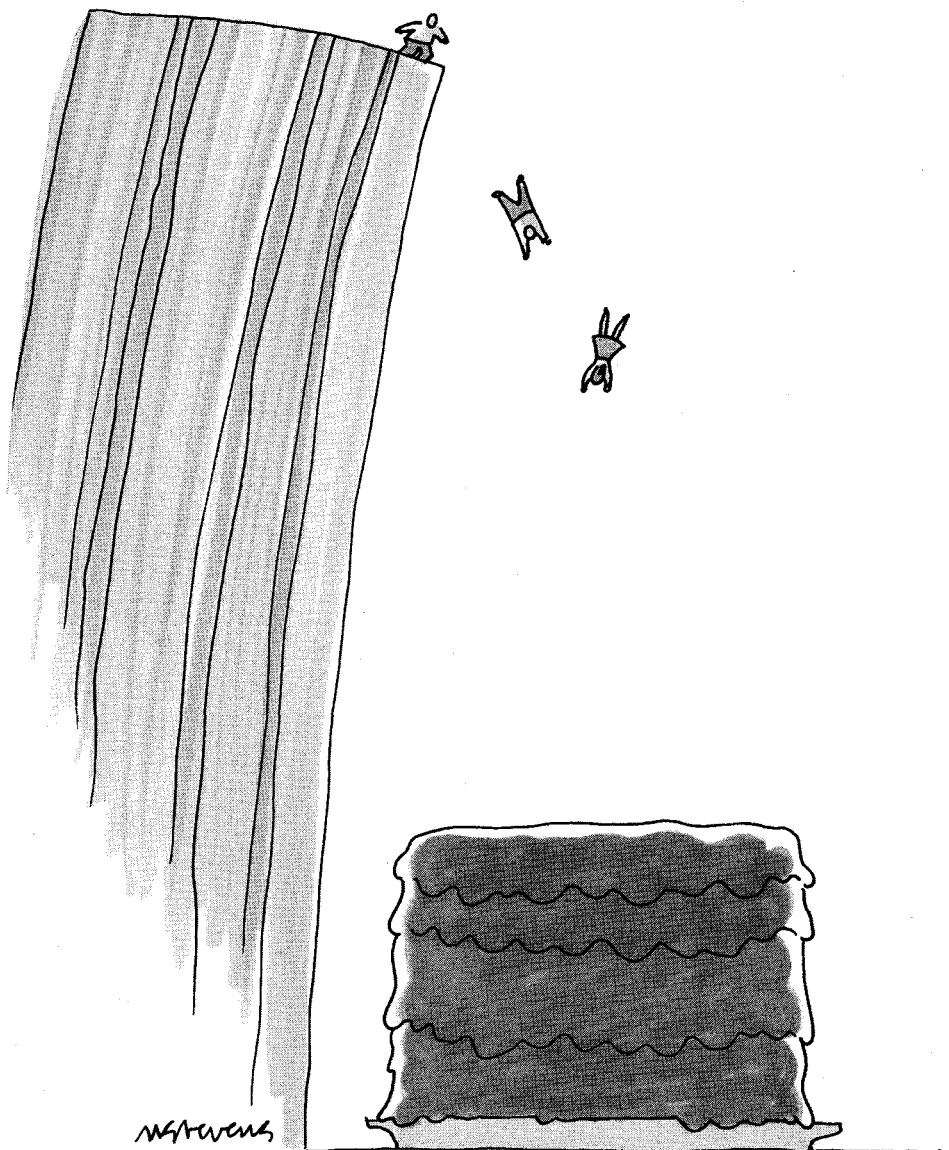
off, and ten minutes later, with thirteen minutes to spare, we pulled up in front of a building with "MASURY STEEL" painted over a side door.

Lonnie hopped out, ran to the door, and went inside. He returned to the truck a few minutes later.

"We make it!" I asked.

"Yeah, with some persuasion. Two-thirty comes a little early around here on Fridays."

We pulled into a lot alongside the building and threw some four-by-fours, which we would need for chocking the load, onto the trailer. After a short, unpleasant discussion with a



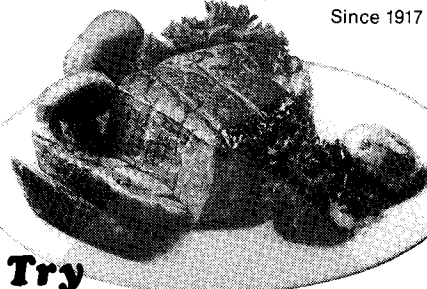
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worker who thought we were thieves, we crossed the road and drove into a cavernous building that housed hundreds of steel coils. Lonnie put two pairs of angle irons on the trailer and wedged the four-by-fours crosswise inside them, and an overhead crane deposited two of the coils, one weighing twenty-one thousand pounds, the other twenty-three thousand pounds, on the trailer. Because the customer, a manufacturer of metal grating in Litchfield, Illinois, was able to off-load them only from the side of the trailer, we put these huge doughnuts, each of them about five feet in diameter, with their holes facing the sides of the trailer rather than its front and back—a configuration known as a “suicide load,” since if a coil got loose it could roll forward into the cab. We secured each coil with two pairs of heavy-duty chains; they were so tight when we finished that when Lonnie hit them with his cheater bar it bounced. We pulled out of the building and parked. Lonnie went around the trailer, testing the chains again for tautness. It was a thick, humid afternoon, and as we stood by the truck, drinking a cup of coffee, greasy rain began to fall.

Masury was the end of the earth. Weeds sprouted everywhere, almost high enough to obscure a “NO SMOKING BEYOND THIS POINT” sign on a nearby building. A small switching yard full of railroad tank cars looked as if it were from the last century. Everything metal—rails, beams, fences, the half-dozen automobiles we could see—was stained with rust; every painted wall was marred by dark stalactite- and stalagmite-shaped splotches. Lonnie said, “Let’s go.” I threw the rest of my coffee on the ground and climbed into the cab.

As we swung slowly onto the highway that would take us a few miles back to a truck stop at Hubbard, Ohio, and a shower and dinner, we saw, on an opposite ramp, an overturned flatbed truck that had been hauling a cargo container. The revolving lights of a wrecker and a pair of police cars were refracted by the increasing rain. “Remember what I said about taking it easy on hard turns?” Lonnie said. “That’s why I’m taking this ramp at seventeen miles an hour.”

We reached Hubbard and pulled in to Truck World, and Lonnie checked the load one more time. As he circled the truck, he noticed several scuff

marks on the tires—marks we had made with the chains or the cheater bar. He spent a minute or so rubbing them out as best he could. “Other drivers see that and they’ll say, ‘I wonder what *he* got too close to. I wonder what *he* didn’t do right.’ I know I do. That’s why I take extra time tarping, too. Most of it is so the tarp doesn’t flap itself into shreds and you have to stop in the middle of the night and fix it, but it’s also a matter of pride. You want to look *good* going down the road.”

AFTER we ate, I took a long shower and stowed my gear in the truck. When I returned to the restaurant, Lonnie had set up messy, hasty shop. Spread before him on the table were his road atlas, his logbook (a softcover, top-bound affair), several sheets of carbon paper, a ruler, some finished log pages to be sent to the Davis Transport office, a dozen or so scrunched-up balls of paper, and a cooling cup of coffee.

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations—with exceptions for adverse weather, Alaskan driving, oil-field-equipment transporters, and emergencies—boil down to this: a driver may not drive for more than ten hours in any eighteen-hour period; nor, if the trucking company is a seven-days-a-week operation, may he be “on duty” (driving, loading or unloading, riding shotgun) more than seventy hours in any eight-day period. Lonnie must account for every minute of his time from the moment he reports for duty to the moment he leaves the truck (or the yard) for home. His logbook must be kept current to his last change of duty. Random inspections of logbooks are made by state inspectors at roadside weigh stations. If a log is found to be falsified or out of date, a driver can receive a fine; if it is three days out of date, the truck can be pulled from service.

Lonnie raced through several days’ worth of logbook preliminaries—signature, date, tractor and trailer numbers, a mark in each of thirty-one equipment-inspection boxes—and began consulting his atlas in order to draw lines through twenty-four-hour grids to record where he had been, when he had been there, and what he had been doing while there (off duty, sleeping, driving, on duty not driving).

Drivers, who are paid by the mile, tend to refer to logs as comic books,

science fiction, or B.W.B. (for "Baffle 'em with Bullshit") forms, and regularly violate the letter and spirit of hours-of-service regulations. A 1986 survey for the Regular Common Carrier Conference found that a majority of truck drivers believe that seventy per cent of their peers routinely drive longer than the rules allow. Even a driver who lectures on truck safety for the American Trucking Associations, the industry's most powerful lobbying organization, told a *Washington Post* reporter that he is a practitioner of "creative logging," and called federal log regulations "a joke . . . horsepucky laws." Drivers sneak around the rules with all the wiliness of aging spitball pitchers. Some keep a pair of logbooks, one of which may show that a driver has just returned to duty after several days off. Other drivers fold the log pages back on themselves, hoping an inspector will be too busy to unfold them. Others tear the pages out of their books as they are updated and put them in a folder in incorrect order, for the same reason. One driver told me that he keeps a bottle of India ink in the cab, with which he can accidentally obliterate vital log entries. (The reverse side of the canny-driver coin is the Texas hand who, coming unexpectedly upon an inspection station one afternoon, raced to catch up on his log as he rolled to a stop. The inspector looked over the paperwork and asked what sort of engine the man had in his truck. "A Cummins 400," the driver told him. "I might have to get me one of those right away," said the inspector, "because, according to this here, you've been pushing three hundred and twenty-five miles an hour since nine o'clock this morning.")

The effects of the violations are somewhat less amusing, however, and will no doubt eventually lead to federal legislation mandating the installation in truck cabs of "black boxes," similar to those used in airliners. A National Transportation Safety Board study of two hundred truck accidents in 1984 and 1985 determined that twenty-eight per cent of them were caused by driver fatigue. Statistics of this sort vary widely, and appear to depend not only on the researchers' methodology and their definition of fatigue but on who sponsors the study. For example, a 1983-84 survey of two hundred and thirty-one truck-accident reports which was sponsored by the American

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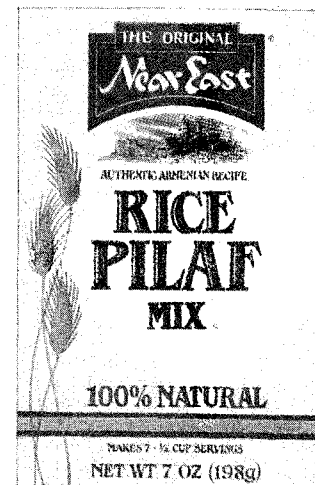


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Automobile Association gives fatigue as either the probable or the primary cause in forty-one per cent of the incidents. In contrast, the American Trucking Associations' brochure "Facts about Truck Safety" still quotes figures from a 1975-76 A.T.A.-commissioned study of three thousand California Highway Patrol truck-accident reports, which gives fatigue as the cause in less than three per cent of the cases.

Ironically, logbooks, which came into being during the Depression, were devised in part to prevent unscrupulous employers from overworking their drivers and blackmailing them with the threat of firing. Today, they are an object of absolute scorn. I spoke with dozens of drivers about logs and hours-of-service rules, and listened to a lot of ranting about big government and federal red tape—discussions that usually ended with the driver saying something like "Senators don't have to clock in and tell someone what they're doing every hour. A cop carries a gun, and he's on duty twenty-four hours a day. Does he have to fill in a log? How'd *you* like it?"—finger pointed at

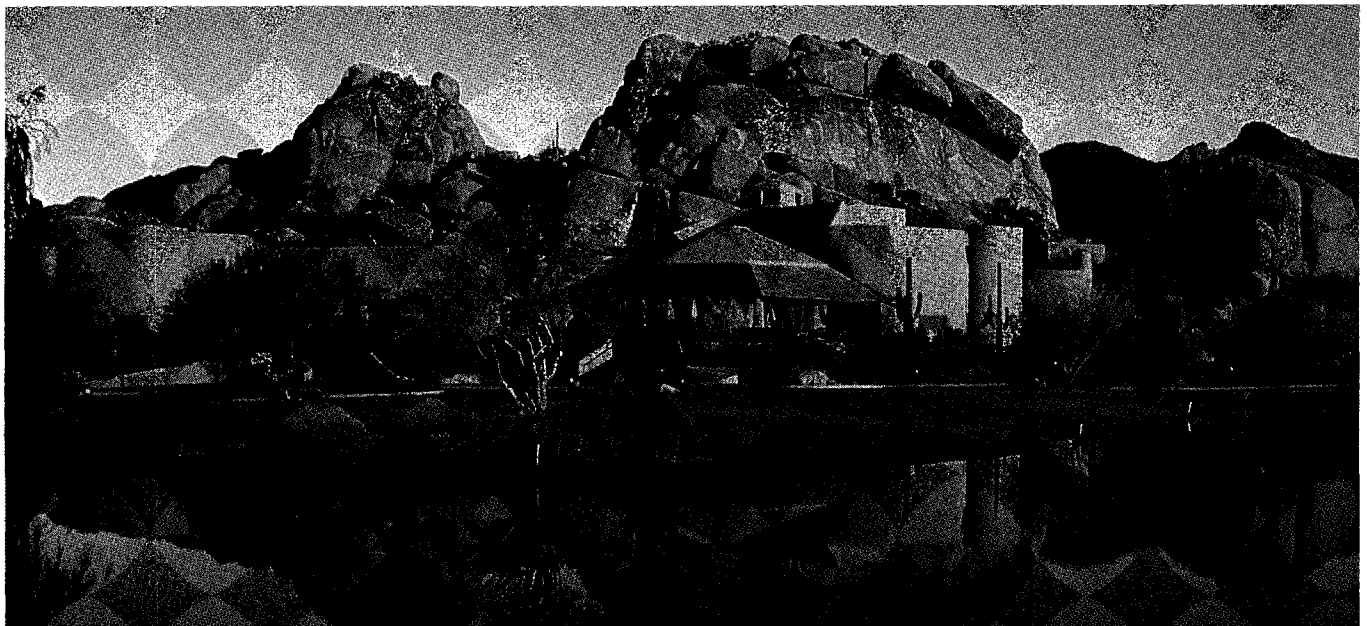
my chest—"if you were told how long you could work each day?" Drivers are not masochists, though; usually, after they have said their piece, it becomes clear that the only reason they drive so many hours is to insure a decent living in a low-wage occupation.

Each time I had asked Lonnie how he managed his logs, he demurred, saying, "It's too complicated." Finally, at Hubbard, as he gathered up the wads of paper and put away his atlas and pens, he motioned to me to take a look at his open logbook and said, "Here, let me show you how a fella might fill out one of these—if he was inclined to cheat and lie and all of that awful stuff."

According to Lonnie, a driver creates a narrative line, whose success depends on the likelihood that his logbook will be inspected by weigh-station authorities only a few times a year. The key to this fiction is backdating: If a driver leaves Mile 0 at noon on Day 1 of his trip and arrives at Mile 600 at midnight, he might note in his log that he left Mile 0 at 2 A.M. on Day 1 and arrived at Mile 600 at noon. He now has twelve phantom off-duty hours

with which to pad out the actual on-duty time he will accumulate on the rest of the trip. In the course of a cross-country trip of several days, these hours will be used up in overwork, giving him enough of a cushion to get him wherever he is going; even a Seattle-Miami trip—approximately thirty-three hundred miles—factors out to sixty-six hours of driving time (averaging fifty miles an hour). The logbook will roll merrily along, showing the driver behind the wheel for nine and three-quarters hours each day and on duty not driving for fifteen minutes, to give him a total daily on-duty time of ten hours and a total daily distance of six hundred miles. (The distance would drop if the driver was running through fifty-five-mile-per-hour states.)

"A fella using that system would gobble up a few of those grace hours every day, most likely," Lonnie said. "To make backdating work, something has to happen every four or five days. Something generally does. He unloads, he gets laid over—something. Then he starts the whole process over again. If nothing does happen to slow



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THE BOULDERS
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him up—well, that's why he might keep a spare book around, showing that he had been out of the truck for a day. But he has to be prepared in case he gets stopped right away. Let's say he didn't leave someplace until 4 P.M. He might have indicated in the log that he left at eight that morning. He's signed his name, ticked off the equipment-inspection boxes, dated it—done everything but put lines through the hour-graph, which he can do in a second. He's gambling that no one will stop him right away and want to look at the book. But let's say he does get stopped right away—at ten minutes after four, when he's not even out of town, and the log shows that he left eight hours earlier. The man says "What you been doing?" The hand says that he fell asleep, or a gal called him on the radio and he went to visit her. There are any number of lies for being too slow. There are no lies for being too fast."

Doug Malone, Lonnie's immediate supervisor at Davis Transport, and Jim Dunn, one of the company's co-owners, described Lonnie to me as a "hard runner"—a driver who consistently accumulates many paying miles each month and gets his loads delivered on time. In October, Lonnie was the fifth most travelled driver in Malone's subfleet of fifty trucks, with just over twelve thousand miles. In November, he was the most productive driver, with nearly twelve thousand five hundred miles.

As one driver said to me, "probably the easiest part of this job is driving the truck—near any fool can point the goddam thing down the road." The trick, he explained, is not only to find the most economical way to get from Point A to Point B but to do it consistently, on schedule, picking up a maximum number of loads along the way. At this Lonnie is very good. For example, after picking up the Masury load and having dinner at the Hubbard truck stop, we drove to another truck stop, just west of Columbus, for the night. At breakfast Saturday morning, I asked Lonnie why he had pushed on the night before instead of waiting until morning, since the Hubbard-Litchfield run was about five hundred miles and we had the whole weekend and part of Monday to cover it.

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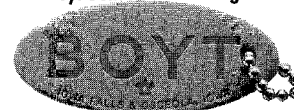
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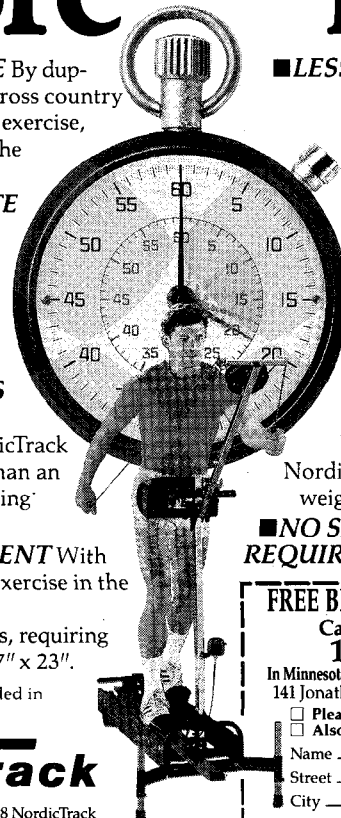
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supposed to end up, the better off you are, generally," he said. "Plus, sometimes there are things that you *know* are gonna happen." He pointed to the paper I was reading. Ohio State was playing at home that afternoon. "I heard it on the radio. We probably would have missed the big rush, but can you imagine what the traffic would be like heading toward Columbus on game day? They take their football seriously around here. No reason to make grief for yourself."

What had seemed to me smooth and, if not leisurely, then levelheaded and patient progress across the country had been orchestrated to the last jot. A productive driver is one who anticipates. Just as Lonnie keeps his eyes six or ten carlengths ahead when he's running down the highway, he keeps his mind two or three days ahead running down the logistical road. He had pushed hard out of Beach, North Dakota, on our second day out. We could have stopped in Minneapolis or Chipewawa Falls instead of Green Bay, but Lonnie knew that once he's asleep it is difficult for him to wake up much before seven in the morning. If he had stopped hours short of Green Bay, he would have arrived not at eight in the morning, just as the lumberyard where we were to unload opened, but at ten or eleven, or maybe even later. He would have run the risk of finding the forklift busy loading local trucks, or the crew knocking off for lunch. If either of these things had happened, he could have missed the next load, Oshkosh to Lodi. As it was, we left Green Bay by ten-thirty in the morning and were in line behind three other flatbeds to load in Oshkosh by noon. The factory quit loading for the day not long after that.

Even as apparently simple a matter as fuelling requires planning. Every time Lonnie pulls off the highway, if only for a quick fuel and a thermos fill, he loses—on the average—from a half hour to forty-five minutes of driving time. Whenever he can, he combines fuelling with pulling in for the night to sleep, or, during the day, with a stretch and maybe a quick meal. He must also keep the federal weight limit of eighty thousand pounds in mind when he takes on fuel. He knows which truck stops offer Green Stamps or free shower tickets, or have reasonably efficient systems for paying for the fuel.

"Drivers work on a seven-day, twenty-four-hour clock," Lonnie told

me. "Customers usually work a five-day, forty-hour clock. I always try to call ahead and see when they shut down for the day. You assume five o'clock, and sure, they're open until five, but they stop loading at two-thirty. Or maybe there's a state holiday for someone you never heard of, and they shut down, or maybe they don't load or unload on Tuesdays, or on Fridays. You can spend some long weekends parked, if you're not thinking. Or, say you're running to some place in Los Angeles with a load to be delivered Monday morning. First of all, truck stops there are few and far between. So you have to make sure you have enough fuel to get out of town after you've unloaded. Now, where do you get this fuel? I'll buy fuel in Las Vegas, or even Salt Lake, and then get into Los Angeles by Sunday night and park as close to the customer as possible—on the street in front of his plant—because on a Sunday night every truck in the country that isn't heading out of L.A. is heading into L.A. Barstow is two hours out of Los Angeles, and all the truck stops there are jammed. There are a couple of big truck stops in Ontario, just east of L.A.—I'm talking about room for hundreds, maybe a thousand trucks in all—and they are *really* jammed. You better not plan on parking there unless you get there on a Friday afternoon or Saturday morning. In L.A., and most cities, I try to get right to the customer's doorstep, set the clock, wake up early, and try for first or so in line to unload Monday morning. That way, if you're lucky, you're heading to the next load between rush hours, and if you're *really* lucky you're loaded and

out of town before everyone heads home from work."

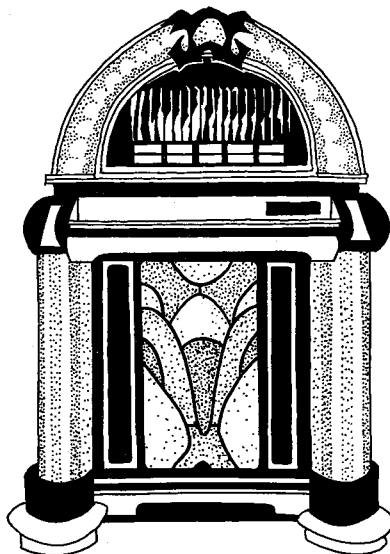
A bad driver costs everyone—shipper, receiver, trucking company, himself—money. In Oshkosh, we had run into another driver—I'll call him Reno—who worked for a Montana-based flatbed company similar in operation to Davis Transport. It was the Tuesday after Labor Day. We had pulled out of the factory loading dock to park along a dirt road and tarp up the panelling we were taking to Lodi, and Reno was putting the finishing touches on a comparable load.

Reno is a lanky, amiable, guileless fellow with dark, curly hair that falls across his forehead. He is in his mid-thirties, but he looks several years younger than that. He has driven for a variety of trucking companies and, briefly, owned his own truck. He was wearing jeans and a T-shirt that read "SEVEN-COURSE DINNER—A CAN OF CHILI AND A SIX-PACK." He had arrived half an hour ahead of us and would be delivering in western Pennsylvania, some six hundred miles east.

Reno was extremely glad to see a pair of fellow-Montanans, and we exchanged home-state pleasantries as Lonnie and I wrestled with our tarps. He told us he had been on the road for nine weeks straight, trying to pay off a few bills. "I seem to be getting a lot of these five-hundred-mile loads, and they don't pay squat," he said. "By the time you find the customer and load and unload, you're further behind than when you began." He had missed picking up a load the previous Friday and had spent the long holiday weekend parked at a truck stop outside St. Paul, two hundred and fifty miles west of Oshkosh. When he found out that we were going to New Jersey, he asked if he could follow us through Chicago.

Lonnie busied himself on the other side of the trailer. He had told me earlier that he hates to team-drive, because no two drivers have the same rhythm. "I'm a hermit out here," he said. (Another driver corroborated the wisdom of this policy: "You're going down the road, right? Well, if he breaks down, I'm broke down. If he's hungry, I have to eat. If he has to piss, I might as well figure on pissing, too.")

Reno was starved for company. When Lonnie didn't answer, Reno launched into his plans. He had all but given up drinking, he told me, to save money. He wanted to get a little re-



frigerator for the truck, so he could bring his own food along and keep from paying restaurant prices. When Lonnie made his way around to where we were standing, Reno repeated his request to follow us.

"Well, we haven't eaten or showered yet," Lonnie said, "and I've got a bunch of paperwork to do, so we probably won't be getting out of here for a couple of hours. You might just want to head on, if you're planning on unloading tomorrow morning."

"Well, I've already eaten," Reno said, looking at his feet, "but my logs are so far behind I couldn't even tell you. I've got to get my paperwork into the office if I want to get paid. That truck stop about a mile south of here is pretty good. You going to stop there? I'll still unload tomorrow."

"Yeah," Lonnie said.

In the truck, Lonnie shook his head. "I tried. I have a feeling we're going to be slowed down. He should have been loaded early this morning and two hundred miles down the road by now."

"How can you sit for three days and not catch up on your paperwork?" I asked.

"How can he not know how to get through Chicago?"

As we headed south after eating, Reno got on the radio and suggested that Lonnie drop to Channel 14, so we could hold a decent conversation without hogging Channel 19.

A decent conversation by Reno's standards, it turned out, was a one-sided conversation. From Oshkosh to Youngstown, Ohio, where we separated from him the next day, we were subjected to nearly constant chatter from Reno—chatter delivered in an increasingly unbearable mock-Southern nasal (Reno is from west-central Montana), which broke down into three general themes: his location at the moment, his planned locations in the next week, and gripes about his employer.

Looping around Chicago into Indiana is not terribly difficult, except for



"It's O.K., Freddie. They're with me."

the traffic. To Reno, however, this part of the trip was a perilous maze that required a thousand questions to negotiate, the answers to which he ignored.

"We take that 94, don't we?"

"What about that 190?"

"We head west here on Tri-State?"

"What lane we talking about up ahead, Lonnie?"

Left to his own devices, Reno would have run into Lake Michigan, or off to Joliet, or onto an O'Hare runway, or back to Milwaukee. The task of guiding him through what Lonnie calls "Beat-You-Down Corner" was made far more difficult by the fact that Reno ran, in Lonnie's phrase, "fast and blind." Despite his evidently absolute dislocation, he refused to roll along behind us, and time after time roared by in the passing lane, only to call from up ahead seconds later, pleading for further instructions.

"You back there, Lonnie?"

"Yeah, three back in the far-right lane, where you better be about right now."

"I can't."

"You better."

"Don't we want 94 East?"

"Make your move there, hand. Get on over!"

Traffic was heavy but spry, until it bogged down on the far side of O'Hare. Hemmed in by dozens of trucks of every size, we rolled on degraded roads through thick, blasphemous air lit by a hydrocarbon-red sun, passing under screaming jets and over huge railroad switching yards full of piggyback flatbed railcars, slowing time after time to pay money to sullen tolltakers, in a vehicle held in bouncing thrall by an indifferent world of gray, gritty commerce, of haphazardness and uncommunity. All the while, Reno's voice filled the cab.

"I gotta get back home. I'll unload tomorrow, then maybe pick up some steel for California. At least, that's what I hope—if I don't get another of these five-hundred-mile loads. I called the dispatcher this morning and gave her a hard time. She said, 'Reno, are you loaded?' I said, 'No, but my truck is!'" He followed this exchange with an eerie, breath-losing laugh so loud that Lonnie immediately reached for the radio and turned down the volume.

Reno kept on talking. "The problem with these trucks is that they don't have enough lights. I'd like lights all around the trailer, about fifty of them,

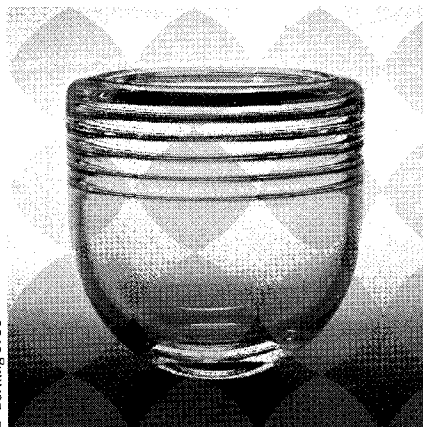


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so we'd be distinctive. Plus some straight stacks"—exhausts without sound baffles—"that would really talk. Plus, these trucks, they don't have enough chrome. I don't know, I've been looking at a truck that my uncle saw in California, a '79 Pete, and maybe I can lease it out. These five-hundred-mile loads are killing me. With my own truck, I'd just say no to them. Plus, I can get home more often, see the wife, take charge of things a little out here on the road, stop getting these five-hundred-mile loads. If I can get a load of steel out of Pittsburgh to California, I'll take a look at it again."

"Lord have mercy, man." Lonnie had dropped his microphone, letting it dangle and bounce in the air between us. "Doesn't he ever stop?"

No. While Reno gabbed on, Lonnie rubbed his forehead. "The man cannot even get through Windy on his own. By the time he gets to Pittsburgh or wherever he's going, he will have spent—let's see, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, he'll unload Wednesday—six days going eight hundred miles. He runs up and down the highway like a scalded dog, and he wants to buy his own truck. It's not a Christian thing to say, but the man is a walking disaster."

As it turned out, there was every likelihood that Reno didn't deliver until Thursday morning, and in twice the time that we had taken to travel nearly twenty-five hundred miles and deliver two loads he would have managed to travel less than half that distance with one load.

East of Chicago—four or five hours after we had eaten and fuelled—Reno suggested that we pull over for coffee. Lonnie let go of the microphone, and said, "I give up." To Reno he said, "O.K.," and we spent the next hour in a Hardee's (or was it a JB's or an Arby's?) listening to Reno tell us about his marital problems, and how he used to go regularly from Great Falls to Missoula—a hundred and fifty miles on a two-lane highway—in two and a half hours, and how he needed to borrow twenty dollars from Lonnie to pay the Ohio tolls, because he had overrun his weekly advance.

We got back on the road. "That finishes it," Lonnie said. "We'd be halfway to Pennsylvania tonight if we hadn't stopped. I was ready to roll, but that last stop broke up the rhythm. Oh,

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man! We get through hell back there, and then we stop during the easy stuff, the mile-eating stuff. I'm gonna be asleep in half an hour."

We did, in fact, stop for the night within an hour, on Lonnie's suggestion—not because he didn't want to keep going but because Reno's chatter had become first slow, then disjointed. Lonnie thought that Reno was becoming seriously tired. Reno told us in the service-plaza lot that his new plan was to catch a few hours of sleep and then head out about four in the morning.

Wednesday morning, at seven, Reno was still parked beside us.

"I woke up and said, 'No way,'" he told me. "The traffic out there was hot and heavy. I figured I'd wait till it cooled off a little. Plus, it was foggy as hell."

It was still foggy, and the interstate was packed with traffic, mostly trucks. We followed Reno into the restaurant. "That man is not going to make a delivery today," Lonnie said.

Over breakfast, Reno figured the same. He'd get to the truck stop at Hubbard, just before the Pennsylvania border, and then see when he could unload. "I probably won't make it today," he said. "They stop receiving at one or so, I bet. I'll probably spend the night in Hubbard, then head down first thing Thursday morning. I like to watch people. I could have made it today, but it's good to get out of the truck now and then, ever' so often."

Near Youngstown, we stopped for fuel, just after Reno suggested that we "put the hammer down" and make some time. Lonnie told him he was going to get in touch with his in-laws, and maybe we'd catch him down the road. In the parking lot of the truck stop, Lonnie switched back to Channel 19. We heard Reno telling another driver about his marital problems, and about how he was going to try to get rid of his five-hundred-mile load and head back to California. "You know how it is out here," we heard Reno say. "The harder you work, the behinder you get."

"He won't make it today, right?" I asked Lonnie.

"Right."

"He'll unload tomorrow, right?"

"I don't know how he can't. Of course, he might find a way."

"Then he's got to pick up a load by Friday . . ."

"Or be stuck for the second weekend



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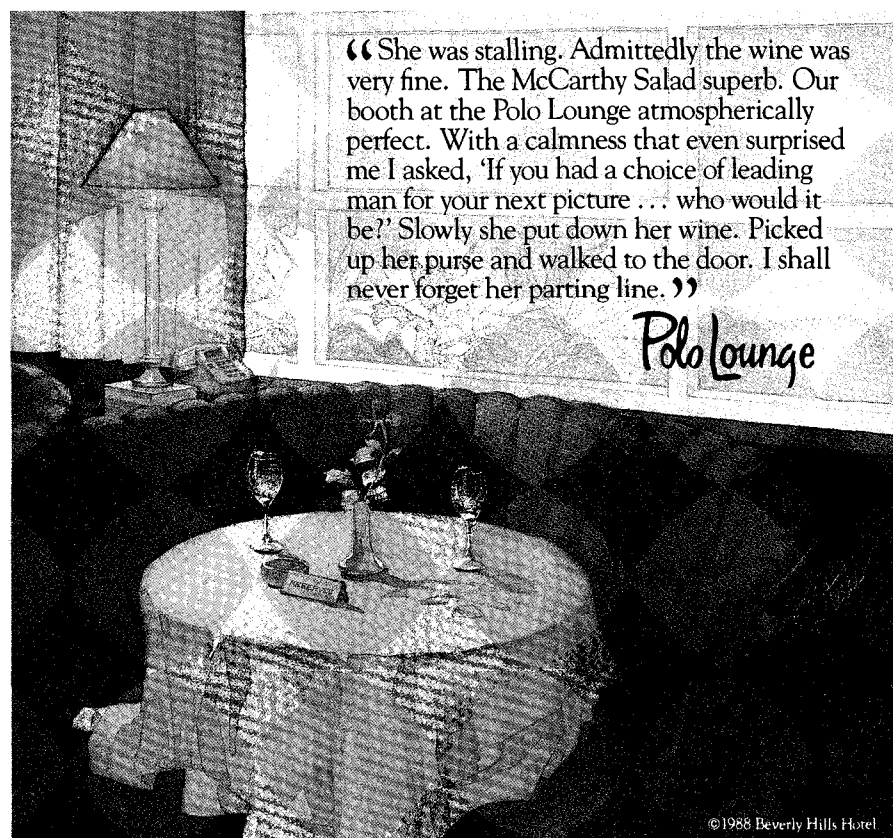
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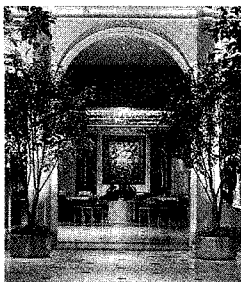


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in a row. Did you learn anything here? Lord have mercy."

WE pulled into Litchfield, Illinois, with the load of steel coils about 5 P.M. on Saturday, for a day-and-a-half layover. Litchfield, at the junction of State Highway 16 and Interstate 55, about an hour northeast of St. Louis, is a pleasant but unremarkable town of seven thousand people. The Best Western Gardens, on its western edge, where we stayed, is a pleasant but unremarkable motor inn, with a coffee shop, a restaurant, a small lounge, and ample, convenient parking for those truck drivers (for example, auto carriers, whose union contracts include a lodging provision) who regularly stay there. It seemed like heaven. Not that the truck had been uncomfortable; despite its necessarily stiff suspension and the seven days on the road, I was not feeling at all bruised. Nor was I tired of travelling; many of the miles we had chalked up had been, for me, new territory, and I had enjoyed the daily unrolling of the landscape. And it wasn't that I was especially weary; I had managed six or seven hours' reasonably sound sleep each night. Rather, Litchfield's attractions had something to do with a growing need to be among people who stayed in one place longer than the time it took for a meal or a shower or an unloading. We registered, and the desk clerk, who had seen Lonnie several times in the last couple of years, greeted him warmly and asked after his family. During the next day and a half, the waitresses began to recognize us. We could unpack our gear, take long showers, stretch out on our beds, watch the Sunday N.F.L. game. I did some laundry. Lonnie went to a movie. I could finish a crossword puzzle without poking a hole through a square with my pen when the truck hit a seam in the road. In short, the place became home. We became citizens. It was a temporary home, certainly, and our citizenship honorary, but it was a giant step from the relentless transience and anonymity of the road.

Lonnie agreed. "Who do I see out there?" he said. "The shipping clerk at a steel mill. The cashier at a fuel desk. Individually, they might be nice people if you got to know them, but he has forty loads to get out right away. She's juggling twenty drivers at once. It's all business. You talk to other drivers, it's

shop talk—loads and dispatchers and griping. You can lose your humanity out there. Sometimes I think that Debby"—Lonnie's wife—"and I should enroll in a sign-language course, so we can communicate when I get back from a trip. But, worse than all that, you have a lot of time on your hands driving. Little things become very important—you brood on them. You and the wife had a little disagreement before you left, or one of the kids acted up and you had to discipline him. Then you had to leave. You go in for a meal, and the waitress has a bad attitude. She's just as tired or human as you are, but you spend the next hundred miles dwelling on her not smiling. After a while, whatever it is begins chipping at the rock, going past the enamel to the sensitive stuff."

Lonnie is more or less a loner on the road. He doesn't hang out with other drivers much, doesn't enter into their bull sessions at truck stops. He can seem aloof, relying as he does on his own resources, the love of his family, and the strength of God to get him down the road. He flirts gently with the women dispatchers ("I can get a long ways over the weekend. You got any loads to Europe?"), jokes with waitresses ("No, thanks. Another cup of coffee and I won't have to start the truck, I'll just *push* the thing to Kansas City"), and even puts his feet up when he makes a rare landing at someplace like the Best Western, as if it were home. But not for long. It's all, clearly, a dim surrogate, and he is soon anxious—"obsessive," he says—to get down the road, to be in the truck, moving, accomplishing, earning money.

The Best Western Gardens is not a truck stop, and after nearly a week of pulling in at one or another of these strange establishments that are spread out across the country it seemed odd to see Lonnie's truck standing by itself in the parking lot. According to the National Association of Truck Stop Operators, there are twenty-three hundred truck stops in America. NATSO defines a truck stop as a twenty-four-hour, full-service facility providing fuel, food, repairs, and lodging (this last might be no more than a place to park). The definition excludes hundreds of lesser businesses—fuel stops, Lonnie calls them—that don't offer repair-shop facilities but cater to truck traffic with convenience stores, cafés, showers, park-

ing, and high-clearance fuel islands.

Truck World, the truck stop in Hubbard, Ohio, employs three hundred and twenty people. It pumps more than a million gallons of diesel a month from its four twenty-thousand-gallon underground tanks. It covers fifty-two acres and has parking for four hundred trucks—a number that turns over, on an average day, about five times. Its restaurant, the Globe, serves about two million dollars' worth of meals a year. "We're right up at the top of truck stops, if you rank us according to size—certainly in the top five per cent, volume-wise," Ed Yasechko, a co-owner of Truck World, told me. "It's an odd business. The other day, a driver came in and I got to talking to him. I asked him where he last fuelled. 'Texas,' he said. Our competition is not across the street or across town, it's five or six hundred miles away. You know how cities on a map are little yellow blocks? I think interstates should be shown as long yellow ribbons. An interstate highway—at least, around a lot of the country—is a city, but it's a city in constant motion."

Truck World encompasses—in addition to its restaurant, showers, and fuel and repair-shop facilities—a thirty-six room motel (HBO available) and an enclosed, L-shaped mall housing two raucous game rooms, a nut-and-chocolate shop, a luggage store specializing in briefcases and suit bags, a gift shop, a shoeshine stand with women attendants, a barber shop and hair salon, a Western-clothing store, a hot-dog stand, a tool store, a cocktail lounge, an Ohio driver's-license bureau, a small laundromat, a communications center (Western Union, a Federal Express station, a video screen advertising available loads), and a magazine-and-tobacco shop. On the Friday evening we were there, Truck World was packed—not only with drivers but with the general Hubbard populace, including teen-agers.

"We cater to both local and transient trade," Yasechko said. "We go out of our way to do this—to be part of the town—because there is a bit of character assassination that goes on about truck stops. The local community—and this isn't specific to Hubbard—generally identifies truck stops with drugs and prostitution. I can guarantee you that there is much more drug trade on any college campus in the country—including Harvard or Yale—than in

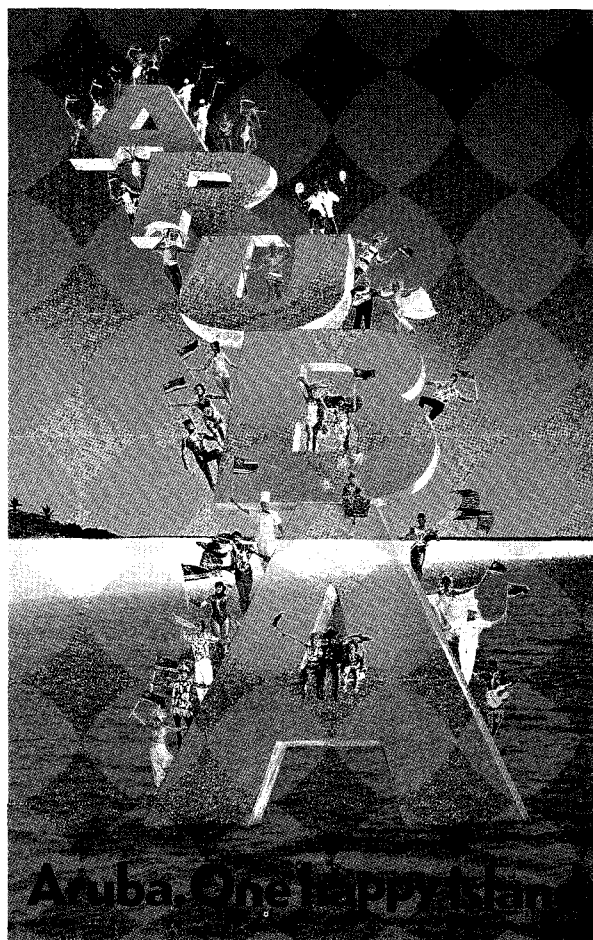
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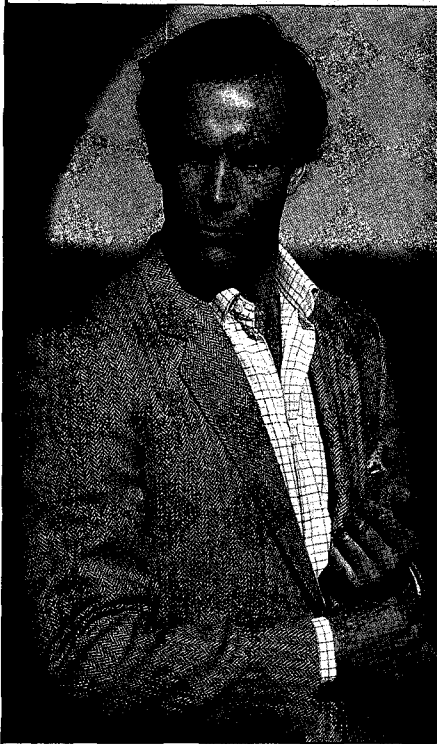
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a truck stop. Backpackers are not welcome here. Bad characters are not welcome here."

Truck stops are no longer primarily small, independent operations. The dingy, roughhouse, utilitarian, "eat and gas up" greasy spoons of old are being replaced by Formica-and-stainless-steel family restaurants offering salad bars, lo-cal and low-cholesterol plates, and regional specialties. Many of them are owned, leased, or franchised by big chains, such as Unocal, Flying J, and Truckstops of America, which are trying to attract millions of dollars a year in trade. Despite a certain homogeneity, however, truck stops often mirror their specific locale. They might be peaceful, prosperous villages, like Truck World or the Petro truck stop outside Portage, Wisconsin, which has regularly scheduled A.A. meetings, a chapel, sparkling shower rooms (thoroughly scrubbed after every use), a restaurant with a farmhouse motif (cloying, sincere), no-nonsense signs prohibiting loitering and soliciting, and a hundred and eighty-two neatly marked parking stalls; or they might be tough, thoroughly urban places, like one large truck stop near Gary, Indiana.

Lonnie refuses to stop at the Gary facility unless he is strongly pressured to do so by an insistent passenger. We rolled in during our second trip, on a Tuesday afternoon—generally a slow time in the day life of a truck stop. We parked, and walked across grease-spongy pavement to the main building, a cluttered maze of narrow hallways leading to a café, a fuel desk, and a small store (convenience food, drugs and toiletries, truck accessories, clothing). We pushed our way upstairs to a lounge, where a clerk behind a snack bar gave us towels and shower keys. Grease fumes from cooking hot dogs and hamburgers swirled everywhere; twenty men sat in connected plastic chairs watching an R-rated movie on TV; and in the far corner, at a bank of pay phones, a half-dozen drivers stood talking, their worn, bulging notebooks perched precariously on the narrow shelves.

The shower was damp and steamy from its former occupant. It was also without clothes hooks; my old clothes went on the floor, my clean clothes lay

across the washbasin, my suitcase became soaked from shower-splash. By the time I returned my key to the clerk at the snack bar, I felt dirtier than I had when I entered.

Lonnie gave me a well-deserved "I told you so" smile when I got back to the truck. "I guarantee you, this place is empty now," he said as we serpentine out of the parking lot. "That was calm in there. Wait until night if you want to see something—quadruple the number of people, and multiply *that* by

a million degrees of weirdness, including druggies. Then you'll see what it can be like. This is a great place to get things stolen. If you hear someone on the radio asking if anyone wants to buy some truck parts, you

better hop out and check your rig. Can you imagine what it's like here late on a weekend night, with drivers with a few drinks in them because they're laid over, and a soft-core porn film on that TV?"

During the day, most truck stops seem no more threatening than the large fuel depots they are. At night, they resemble open-air dormitories. A few rigs are idling, their amber clearance and identification lamps burning like nightlights. Windshields and windows are blocked with shades, or left exposed with the sleeper shut off by a sliding curtain. From behind some sleeper curtains—maybe one in twenty-five on any given night—comes the soft glow of a television screen. Now and then, however, a truck stop that is Yourtown, U.S.A., in daylight can turn ominous under cover of dark. At a truck stop near Rogers, Minnesota, one warm, humid night, I ran in to fill the thermos. As I crossed the lot, I was on the playing field of a truck-packed stadium. Some drivers sat in their cabs; others sat on concrete bumpers that formed the outside perimeter of the lot, drinking beer and chucking the cans over their shoulders into the weeds. The lot smelled of skunk and diesel. A few minutes earlier, on the CB, I had heard a woman introduce herself as Quickie Sue and a driver suggest that she come on by the Rogers truck stop and talk.

"How will I know where you're at?" she asked.

"Honey, just walk along the back row, and I'll let you know sure



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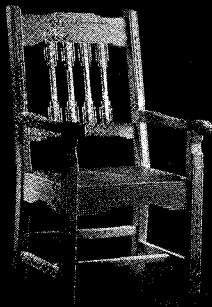
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enough," came the answer, followed by high-pitched laughter.

Many of the cab doors had names painted on them, and each seemed more desperate than the last: Rhonda, Dream Lover, Hog Heaven, Dirty Dawg, Midas Touch, Outlaw, Rebel Yell, Night Rider. The usual Confederate-flag decals were there in force, and so were license plates showing a gray-bearded Confederate soldier carrying the Stars and Bars beside the message "Forget, Hell!" The Union was represented by bumper stickers showing an American flag and the legend "These Colors Don't Run. Never Have, Never Will." I didn't see Quickie Sue, but her search for clients was made easier by a number of signs stuck in truck windows: "No Whores. No Drugs;" "Married Man;" "Lot Lizards Get Lost." Inside the truck stop, bright fluorescent lights bathed the usual fuel-desk/restaurant/store complex in a quivery glare. The game room was filled. Teen-agers, drivers, and truck-stop employees stood at video machines and crane games, using body English to improve their scores, and swearing loudly if it didn't do the trick. The store sold the usual overpriced essentials, near-essentials, and not-at-all essentials—maps, atlases, sunglasses, watches, CBs, TVs, knives, antennas, cowboy boots, gloves, truck accessories (chrome-plated lug nuts, seat covers, air fresheners), stuffed animals of many species (some recognizable), picnic coolers, souvenir spoons, audiocassettes, piggy banks, necklaces, toy trucks, over-the-counter medicines, toiletries, snack food, beer, flannel shirts, nylon jackets, and a large selection of T-shirts and billed caps, almost all of them with a message: I WISH I HAD A JOB TO SHOVE; A MAN'S NOT COMPLETE 'TIL HE'S MARRIED . . . THEN HE'S FINISHED; IF THE MEEK SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH, WHO WILL DRIVE THE BIG TRUCKS?; MY DAD IS A TRUCKER; I DRIVE WITH PRIDE. As a waitress filled the thermos with coffee, I listened to exhausted men far from home making talk: "The goddam boss told me, he said, 'You drive too fast.' I said to him, 'Hell, if I drive any slower it cuts into my sleep time.' Then I hung up on the son of a bitch." The speaker's audience of two had heard the story before and didn't laugh. Before my trips with Lonnie were over, I had heard the same story several times myself. Another man



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spoke on the phone in a loud voice: "I give you all the goddam money I have and most of what I haven't even seen yet. I'm out here in damn Minnesota busting ass, and all you can do is sit there on your fat butt and complain." He looked closer to tears than to homicide.

I might have been inferring a more sinister place than actually existed, but crime—prostitution, drug dealing, and theft—is a concern in some large truck stops, and the trend among owners seems to be to upgrade lot security in the hope that a general image upgrade will follow. "At Truck World, we patrol the grounds ourselves," Ed Yasechko told me. "Our employees keep an eye out. If there's someone we decide is undesirable, who doesn't have a reasonable purpose here, who looks out of place, we don't call the police; we tell them we want them off the property. If they don't go, then we'll call the police, and they can count on four or five hours of detention and questioning in town." At the Ontario, California, 76 Auto/Truck Plaza, the discouraging of illegal commerce is a more formal matter. The operation, about the size of Truck World, is situated in a smoggy, sprawling desert suburb about thirty-five miles from downtown Los Angeles. For the past six years, it has had a professional twenty-four-hour security force and a high fence around its four-hundred-truck-capacity parking lot, which is drenched in artificial daylight after sundown.

Lonnie is not much concerned with the sometimes sordid behavior he sees at truck stops. "Drivers have a *big* problem with boredom," he says. "They're in the cab, alone, fifteen, sixteen hours a day, and then they go into a truck stop for the night. Well, they try to overcome that boredom in a limited time. Human nature usually says that you do that by doing things that make you feel good. Fast. And drivers are human."

Sandy Psyk, a Missoula driver who now works as a truck salesman after covering nearly three million miles during his long-haul career, agrees that some truck stops can be rough places. "But don't go and blame the drivers," he told me. "A lot of 'em have been working real hard for days and days. What's the difference between them and a bunch of soldiers who have been on patrol for a month,

or cowboys off a cattle drive, coming on into town looking for fun?"

WE unloaded the steel coils at Litchfield first thing on Monday morning and picked up a load literally across the street—a gross of twenty-foot lengths of ten-inch-diameter PVC pipe, which we would take to a water-pipeline project in a field outside Aberdeen, South Dakota. From there, the dispatcher said, we'd get some wheat and head back to Missoula.

Lonnie was ecstatic to be going home, and we hustled to get the pipe strapped and tarped. It was a good load—not as compact or manageable as bundles of reinforcing bars or street-light poles, a pair of Lonnie's favorite loads, but a lot better than unstable, strap-cutting, crushed cars, Lonnie's least favorite load. The pipe was light—twenty-six thousand pounds—and we had to tarp only its front end, to protect it from greasy exhaust fumes. Despite our haste, Lonnie took care to use extra straps—three belly straps and three top straps each for the front and rear halves of the twelve-bundle load. As usual, he twisted the straps before cinching them down, so they wouldn't flap in the wind. We headed back to the Best Western Gardens, took a shower, ate breakfast, filled the thermos, bumped the tires, and washed the windows and mirrors. Before dropping off the key and saying goodbye to the desk clerk, Lonnie called Debbi.

"Hi, honey. You must know something is up, since I'm making this expensive call on a Monday. We're heading home. . . . Thursday, maybe earlier. I love you." Twenty miles toward St. Louis, I asked Lonnie which way we were going to get to Aberdeen.

"The fast way," he said.

Our high spirits were dashed minutes later. We saw a line of trucks and cars ahead of us, parked on both sides of the interstate.

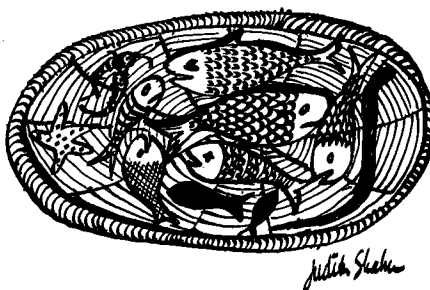
"Accident," Lonnie said.

A two-horse trailer pulled by a

pickup was off the side of the road, on fire, with flames and smoke pouring from it. On the shoulder, a large white horse loped away from the trailer, stopped and ran into a fence, then stood staring at the road, dazed. Just outside the trailer was another horse, gray, on its side, twitching and heaving, with blood running out of its nostrils. A dozen men stood by, watching, as the animal feebly kicked against the air. Lonnie pulled himself over the steering wheel after we passed. I slumped in my seat. We didn't speak a word for over two hours.

I saw one other bad accident on my trips with Lonnie. At the start of our second trip, eastbound an hour short of Billings, just before nightfall, we rounded a curve and saw a car turned upside down in the far westbound lane and another car, badly smashed but upright, twenty yards ahead of it. Behind the cars, traffic had backed up a quarter of a mile. A dozen vehicles had their emergency flashers on, and their amber flashing mixed with the blue revolving lights of two police cars to make an eerie wash over the darkening, otherwise empty stretch of land. Twenty people or so were standing around, talking to policemen. A third police car, which arrived as we passed, seemed in no hurry. Nor did the ambulance we saw heading toward the wreck a few minutes later, with neither its siren nor its flashing lights on. Lonnie had said nothing. I asked him about other accidents he had seen, and his answer was gruff: "That's something I do not talk about."

One other part of his life that Lonnie would prefer not to talk about in detail is his disastrous ownership of a truck. In 1983, with Debbi pregnant, he quit a local welding job and began driving for a man who had leased two flatbeds to a South Dakota company. Lonnie eventually lease-purchased one of them, a 1978 Kenworth cab-over with six hundred thousand miles on it. He assumed the eighteen-hundred-dollar-a-month payments on a two-year agreement. "A year or so later—and that was a year spending as much time underneath the truck as behind the wheel—I wanted to take a few days off," he told me. "I let someone take it south for a round. It got hit early one morning in Nevada, by a dump truck with no lights." He finally got sixty-two hundred dollars in the settlement,



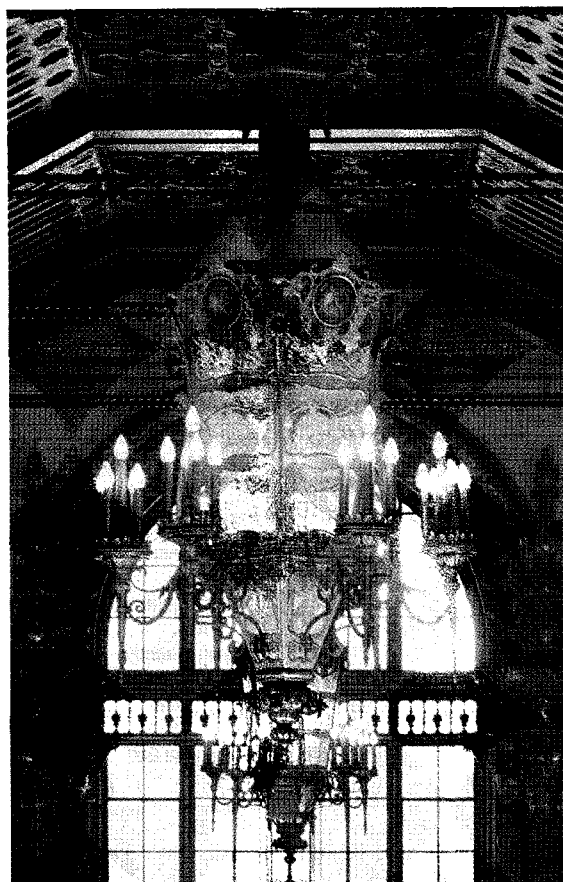
all of which, and more, went for attorneys' fees and towing and repair bills. The truck was down for three weeks. "I sold it eventually, for seventeen thousand," he said. "With the money I paid to fix it up and the money that went in payments, it amounts to spending one year losing ten thousand dollars. It was the blackest period of my life. I know one thing. If I ever own another truck—and I won't unless things are all stacked in my favor—that truck is never even going across the street without me in it. If I'm not behind the wheel, those tires do not turn. I just want to get on through time with quality and dignity, and provide for my family. I wasn't providing. It's so hard to talk about all that. A man don't like to admit he's been beat."

LONNIE is no great fan of his CB radio. Though he leaves the radio on probably two-thirds of the time he is driving, he keeps the volume low, turning it up only if he sees a truck in distress or catches a report of an accident, heavy traffic, or some road obstruction. His rare conversations involve logistics or plain good manners—asking for directions to a customer, informing a driver of load or equipment abnormalities (shifting cargo, flapping tarp, burned-out tail-lights), telling an oncoming driver about an accident, police, or an open scale ahead. (Many of Lonnie's loads are close to the federal weight limit, but even if he is under the legal gross weight he might be overloaded on a pair of axles. If he is close to overweight and hears from another driver that a scale is open, he will move the trailer forward, by flipping a slide-release switch on the dashboard and softly hitting the brakes. The trailer's forward move throws more weight on the tractor's steering axle. After passing through the scale, he reverses the process, since a back-sitting load generally gives an easier ride.)

"Say there, eastbound," he might say, "you got a bear at the three-four-one stick draggin' his hooks looking for large cars."

"Good afternoon, J. B.," he might say to a J. B. Hunt truck. "'Bout a mile east of Aberdeen there, some funny-lookin' folks in wide hats want to weigh you and read some comic books."

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patchy ground fog a hundred yards or so behind a semi that, according to a sign on its trailer, was hauling mail on contract. Just behind the truck, too close for comfort, was a small passenger car. "That four-wheeler is drafting," Lonnie said. "Fool! The hand in the truck doesn't even know he's there." He got on the radio. "Say there, westbound rain, hail, and all of that good stuff, you got a roller skate behind you, maybe all of fifteen feet, who's getting a free ride."

"Well, well. What do you know?" the driver answered. "I do thank you. I just hope that little fella knows that if my dog here barks"—a radar detector, or "bird dog"—"I slow down *real* quick like."

Lonnie might, in heavy traffic, use the radio to tell a truck that has just passed him that it is safe to return to the right lane. Otherwise, he flips his headlights on and off after the driver is clear. The other driver acknowledges the gesture by blinking his trailer lights a few times.

"Pumpkin," Lonnie said to a Schneider National Carriers driver—Schneider's trailers are painted a dis-

tinctive orange—as we approached Green Bay, "this here's your part of the world. Can you tell us how we might find the Weyerhaeuser yard?"

I enjoyed listening to the drivers, but it was often difficult to understand them—especially since one requirement for airtime seems to be a brick-thick Southern accent delivered by a mouth too close to the microphone. There were other problems. At one point, I had taken the CB microphone from its clip to Lonnie's right, above the windshield, and begun pretending I was on the air: "Say there, eastbound good buddy, you got a bear at the two-eight-seven stick—" when I was interrupted by Lonnie's laughter. "What you don't want to do, I don't think, is call someone 'good buddy.' No, definitely not."

It turns out that the most famous term in the CB vocabulary, which used to mean "friend" or "fellow-driver," has become slang for "homosexual." CB slang has settled down, but it is still quirky and evocative. Chicago is Windy; San Francisco is Gay Bay or Turbo; Ohio is Buckeye; Washington, D.C., is Watergate; Florida is Bikini;

and Los Angeles is Shaky. Consolidated Freightways trucks are Corn Flakes; U.P.S. long-haul trucks are Buster Browns; unmarked police cars are "plain wrappers" (a brown unmarked car is a "brown wrapper"); and the passing lane can be "centerfield," "the hammer lane," or "the showoff lane." Cars are "four-wheelers," small cars are "roller skates," and—at least, in Lonnie's vocabulary—Japanese cars are "rice-grinders." The notion of handles—radio nicknames—seems to be as passé as C. W. McCall or "Smokey and the Bandit" movies. Lonnie, for example, calls himself the Pilgrim, but I heard him introduce himself that way only a few times, usually to another Davis driver he caught up with on the road.

Drivers often use the CB merely to pass the time. "That ol' Buick must have something *mighty* fine waiting for him wherever he's going," a driver will say of a speeding car.

"Mr. Davis"—to Lonnie—"was that a raccoon squashed back there, you think?"

"Say there, Mr. Werner"—a large Omaha-based trucking company—



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"you getting regular loads these days?" (leading to a conversation about pay, equipment, and working conditions).

Sometimes the CB gets downright weird and delightful. Once, late at night, I heard a driver singing—badly but enthusiastically—the chorus from "Alice's Restaurant" over and over again, near Limon, Colorado. Another time, near Harrisburg, we listened to a concert of fiddle music—either a live performance by a truck passenger or a relay from the truck's tape deck. Near Indianapolis, the undulating wail of a French police siren came over the radio, followed by an entertaining falsetto rendition of "On the Good Ship Lollipop."

The CB can also be abused. As we passed through Akron, sign after sign told us to monitor Channel 19 for important construction and alternate-route information. Lonnie turned on the radio, and for the next several minutes we listened to two drivers telling each other dirty jokes. "I swear," Lonnie said in disgust, "we might come to a dead end up ahead thanks to those two. That's real consideration for you. I don't know why some of these guys keep driving, when all they should be doing is drinking wine on the corner out of paper bags."

At its worst, the CB has become an electronic restroom wall, upon which drivers anonymously scrawl their most secret and vicious thoughts. After the "Good Ship Lollipop" concert, one driver clapped and whistled his appreciation. A voice said, "I don't know why you're clapping. That sounded like a goddam faggot."

"Exactly, my friend," came an exaggeratedly effeminate voice.

"Oooh, now, where are you *at*, good buddy?"

This was followed by a string of violent, not very imaginative suggestions as to what the last speaker could do with himself. A certain amount of sexual and drug solicitation goes on, and some prostitutes seem to have reserved channels for themselves, but the majority of the over-the-air commerce I heard struck me as ersatz or experimental—the equivalent of children's phone pranks. The strings of racist, misogynist, and homophobic epithets were not. Sometimes I felt I was listening in on a Ku Klux Klan meeting, or the musings of a large street gang of teen-age boys who had been rebuffed by the girls at a community dance. There

is a simmering anger out there, and its targets are specific and predictable—blacks, homosexuals, and women.

Bubba Davis, a Missoula driver with ten years' cross-country experience, has given up almost completely on the CB. "Now I never turn that thing on unless I absolutely have to," he says. "It's real easy for people to muddy water they don't have to drink from."

Sandy Psyk also turned off his CB for good before he retired. "I got so sick of it I took it right out of the cab," he told me. "It encourages people to break the law. I'm not saying I didn't break the law sometimes, but with the radio all a fella has to do is call ahead to see if a scale is open or if there's a cop. I guess what I'm saying is that the CB takes the *skill* out of keeping out of trouble. When it first came up, I thought it was a great idea. Now it's abused. Drivers can be pretty lonely guys. They'd lie, most of them, even if the truth fit better. With the CB, you have all this acting out, all this talking trash. Before the CB, people thought drivers were Knights of the Road. Now they can listen to drivers talk. You've listened. How many drivers would record their radio conversations and play them at home to the kids? The CB has set the trucking industry back twenty years."

THE image of the American long-distance truck driver reached a folkloric apex in the mid-nineteen-seventies, after the first wildcat shutdown by many of the nation's independent truckers in protest against rising fuel costs and government-ordered reductions in highway speed limits. (A subsequent shutdown, in 1979, was more widespread—some estimate that at one point fully sixty per cent of the independent trucks were off the road—and was marred with violence that many people interpreted as hooliganism.) Organizers of the strike were neither Teamster officials nor embedded-in-

Washington lobbyists. Many of them were regarded by the American public as working stiff—good citizens deprived of making a living by Arabs and a ponderous federal bureaucracy. Angry, ingenuous, plain-speaking, brimming with common sense, truckers were embraced in a succession of songs, movies, and one preposterous television series—"Movin' On." (This series, or one of its two principal characters, has endured. If a driver is "doin' it to it like Sonny Pruitt," he is getting down the road and then some.) The independent truckers—and, to a lesser extent, company drivers, like Lonnie—were referred to in the media as modern American cowboys. As Michael Agar notes in "Independents Declared," an anthropological study of these owner-operators, the analogy is accurate, but not for the generally supposed reasons. Cowboys, he points out, also "wore utilitarian clothes, engaged in long days of hard work, and ate boring and nutritionally deficient food." Furthermore, Agar observes, cowboys were not romanticized until after their open-range days were over, and many truckers would agree that the combined effects of deregulation and ever closer scrutiny—by government agencies and their own companies—long ago snuffed out the days of the romantic open road.

The pendulum of public opinion has swung in part because of a March 15, 1987, segment of "60 Minutes" entitled "Killer Trucks." The piece revolved around an interview with a semi driver named Orville Rolston, who had run a red light and hit a car, killing one Sharon Mullins. Rolston left the accident scene. According to "60 Minutes," he had had at least twenty-five accidents—including one other fatality—over the last twenty years, and had been arrested twice for drunk driving. The segment began with the statement that "nearly five thousand Americans die each year from accidents involving those big tractor trailers," and toward the end there was a reference to an Insurance Institute for Highway Safety study of three hundred and seventeen drivers which reported that twenty-eight per cent of them were found to have marijuana, cocaine, amphetamines, or other drugs in their systems.

These days, editorials and letters to the editors of trucking-industry magazines speak to a few related themes:



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trucks are safer than cars, the huge majority of truck drivers are not drug-crazed demons, and can't something be done about truckers' general image? The answer to the question is probably no, not for a while. The two statements are oversimplifications. Are trucks safer than cars? Yes and no. Are truck drivers habitual drug users? No one really knows. The "60 Minutes" story, for example, employed a less than rigorous interpretation of the I.I.H.S. survey's drug statistics. It also ignored a plethora of other surveys on traffic accidents, placing the figure of five thousand truck-related deaths per year in something of a misleading context. Truck accidents, fatal and non-fatal, have been studied by private universities, public universities, private firms, federal departments and agencies, and state departments and agencies. They have been undertaken in states as diverse as Washington, Tennessee, New Jersey, Florida, and California. Accidents have been broken down by speeds involved, road types, truck types, cargoes, weight, time of day, time of year, and many other variables, in any number of ways. Only a few consistent findings emerge: large trucks appear to be involved in fewer accidents per mile than passenger cars when all types of roads are considered; on interstates and divided toll roads, however, trucks may be more likely to have an accident than passenger cars; if both a truck and a car collide, there is a much greater chance that a fatality will occur than if a car has a collision with another car, and any fatalities are likely to be occupants of the car rather than of the truck. It makes sense: when one vehicle collides with another vehicle, and one of the vehicles weighs up to forty times as much as the other, the likelihood of fatal injury is greatly increased; and anyone in the lighter vehicle is obviously more vulnerable.

One major weakness of all these statistical surveys is that they do not address one question: Can blame be assigned? Accidents often have multiple causes. A car passes a truck in the rain on an interstate, returns to the right lane about the time another car is coming up an on-ramp, and both cars and the truck collide. The rain obscured everyone's vision. The truck was going sixty-seven miles an hour. The driver of the first car had had two beers on the way home from work.

The driver of the second car misjudged the first car's speed. The truck driver had been driving for eight hours straight. His brakes were slightly out of adjustment. The on-ramp car's brakes were equally out of adjustment. The first car driver was reaching for the cigarette lighter. The truck driver was adjusting his air-suspension seat. The second car driver was turning up his radio. For starters.

Lonnie's position, and that of many other drivers I spoke with, is that since cars and trucks are a lethal combination basic driver-education courses—and license requirements as well—for automobile drivers should include sections dealing with large trucks. "I have a responsibility up here," he says. "I'm a professional. I know what I can do. But does the driver of a car know what I can or can't do? This is a sixty-five-foot vehicle, not a Toyota."

The final version of the I.I.H.S. survey cited by "60 Minutes," which was published a few months after the broadcast, showed in fact that twenty-nine (not twenty-eight) per cent of the drivers studied had drugs in their systems. Though the program strongly

suggested that this was proof of yet another national crisis, a closer inspection of the data—specifically, on quantitative drug levels and the length of time that different drugs stay in a person's system—does not bear this out. The study's drivers, passing in succession through a weigh station, voluntarily gave blood or urine or both for sampling. (Thirty-eight other drivers refused to participate.) Less than one per cent of the drivers had alcohol in their systems, and in every case the blood-alcohol concentration was "well below" the criterion for intoxication in each of the fifty states. Three per cent of the drivers appeared "either to be frequent users or to have used marijuana recently." "Recent" and "frequent," however, are relative terms. Marijuana residues can be detected in the body of a casual user for up to seven days, and in a chronic user for up to a month. If the test was conducted on a Monday, say, that means that a driver who smoked a joint on Saturday night would register marijuana in his system, but he could hardly be considered high. Two per cent of the drivers

had cocaine in their systems; cocaine can be detected in urine for two or three days. Five per cent of the drivers tested positive for prescription stimulants such as amphetamine or methamphetamine; the detection period for amphetamine or methamphetamine is from two to five days. Twelve per cent tested positive for non-prescription stimulants like ephedrine (commonly sold at truck stops); about half of these drivers said they had taken the drugs recently to counteract cold or flu symptoms. Eleven per cent of the drivers tested positive for aspirin or acetaminophen. One driver tested positive for a minor tranquilizer, and one for a barbiturate—both in medically appropriate doses. No opioids or hallucinogens were detected. Two drivers were beyond the test-mandated detection threshold for caffeine, and another was approaching the threshold. According to the study, "all three reported drinking large amounts of coffee (more than ten cups since they last slept) or using diet pills." The study's abstract ends with this statement: "The extent of driver impairment attributable to the observed drugs is un-

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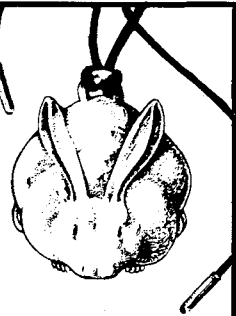
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certain, due to complexities in the relationship between performance and drug concentrations."

I smelled marijuana once in the ten thousand miles I rode with Lonnie. I did hear people offering marijuana several times over the radio—usually near large truck stops. Despite the fact that Lonnie and I, in the context of the tidied-up America of the late nineteen-eighties, looked like good prospects for a dope sale, we were never approached in a truck stop, and only once were we offered a smoke of any kind. That offer came over the radio. "A burn of good sinsemilla" was how the driver put it. He was a former Montanan (not Reno) with whom we had been radio-chatting for twenty miles or so as we drove across Ohio. I heard several suspiciously chatty drivers over the radio, but in the truck stops and terminals I never actually saw anyone using drugs—other than people drinking beer in or near parked trucks. What I did see, however, was driver after driver who looked as if he hadn't had a good night's sleep for longer than he would have preferred.

WITHIN two days of home that first trip, we delivered the pipe near Aberdeen, South Dakota. We picked up a load of wheat in Bowman, North Dakota, later that evening, and after one last night on the road we pulled into Missoula the next afternoon. Lonnie called ahead home, and we shook hands at a truck stop east of town.

"I'll take the truck down home and park it at a lot near the highway," he said. "Then, on Sunday, I'll head over to Idaho—Lewiston. You can come along, if you want."

I didn't go, and the next time I spoke with Lonnie I was glad I had taken a rain check. When he got to Lewiston, he was twelfth in a long line of grain trucks waiting overnight to unload their cargo, which would make its way on barges down the Snake and Columbia Rivers and eventually to Asia. He unloaded and waited around for another load. The dispatcher finally found one for him, in nearby Princeton, but he arrived at the mill only to find that they weren't ready for him. He loaded four hours later, returning to Missoula about 1 A.M. Tuesday. He had been gone thirty-seven hours and had driven a little under five hundred miles, mostly on mountain roads. For

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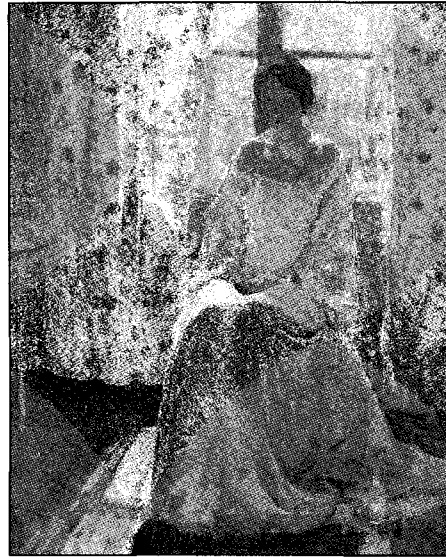
MUCH of the second trip that Lonnie and I made, in late October and early November, retraced our original route. We cut from Interstate 80 onto Interstate 76 just west of Youngstown and, surrounded by fog and misty rain, dropped off the lumber we were carrying at a dismal industrial park outside Pittsburgh, under the gaze of a chained Doberman pinscher and a crew of surly warehousemen. We again picked up a load of steel coils at Masury and again unloaded them in Litchfield. We took half a day to load some grating in Litchfield and unload it sixty miles away, in St. Louis—an uncharacteristically short haul. We picked up grinding balls in Kansas City, ran through storms all the way to Denver, spent the weekend in Vernal, Utah, waiting to unload at a phosphate mine, and squeaked into a steel mill near Salt Lake City minutes before closing time. There we loaded more coils, which we delivered thirty-six hours later in Torrance, California.

Lonnie's mood had deteriorated, and he was generally more impatient with the world, and a lot wearier, than he had been on the first trip. For me, some of the romantic lustre of riding around in a truck had passed. We crossed much of the same territory; the weather was colder; autumn's colors had come and gone.

Somewhere near the Utah-Arizona border, I had told Lonnie that I thought I'd bail out in Los Angeles and fly home. He delivered me in the San Fernando Valley, near a busy intersection defined by a handsome old hotel, a supermarket, and a television-and-movie production office. The dusty, mud-caked truck seemed as out of place among the shiny Mercedes-Porsche-BMW traffic as it had in cramped Hackensack. We stood on the sidewalk by the truck for a few minutes and talked. I said it wouldn't be long before he got home. Lonnie nodded, and answered quickly, almost compulsively—anxious to get going, sorry to lose my company.

"I had a brain attack back there on the 405," he said. "Before I get home, I'll make reservations down at Sleeping Child Hot Springs for a couple of days. Just Deb and me—no kids. We'll bring our special wineglasses, and I'll tell Sleeping Child to put a bottle of

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Mateus wine on ice. We'll head down there a day or so after I get home. The first day is for the whole family. I'll call Deb about a half hour from home. She'll draw me a big bath, scalding hot, just before she heads down the driveway to meet me with the kids. By the time we get home, it'll be just the right temperature. Haus'll meet us when we pull up. He gets so excited he runs in great big circles around and around the house. On one of those passes, he'll pick up a stick for me to throw. Now, when that dog picks up a stick he picks up a big one—firewood stuff. You gotta be one of those Scotsmen to heave it."

We both laughed. "I better get this monster on down the road before they arrest me for wrecking property values," Lonnie said.

"Keep the shiny side up, partner," I said.

"And the rubber side down."

He pulled away from the curb, and waited at a traffic light. Then, after a couple of quick blasts from his horn, he made a wide right turn onto Ventura Boulevard and slowly disappeared from sight.

I headed for the hotel, and a few hours later I was scrubbed and rested, sitting in a comfortable lounge talking

to character actors, with a giant perfect Margarita in my hand. Lonnie was heading north, in the dark, on Interstate 5 up the San Joaquin Valley to San Leandro, in the Bay area, drinking coffee, pushing himself so he could load early in the morning. In San Leandro, on Thursday, he'd pick up some lumber for western New York. He thought he'd run hard east, he had told me, and maybe spend a few hours with the in-laws in Youngstown. A Monday delivery would be tough, almost impossible. Tuesday looked good.

I flew home the next day, on an evening flight, with an hour or so layover in Salt Lake City. About the time the plane took off from Salt Lake and climbed above the dark, empty land, Lonnie was topping Donner Pass, on Interstate 80, about to head across the Nevada desert toward Utah, Wyoming, Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York, so he could turn around and do it all over again, the whole time praying like hell that the weather would hold for a few thousand more miles.

—BRYAN DI SALVATORE

(This is the second part of a
two-part article.)

ONE SOUNDING FOR A FINAL NOTE

She concentrates on a wooden sound,
Homely as oar against boat.

Her hand, almost still,
"Like a claw," she says staring.

Wears anger, but worn as a ring,
Worn as in weary, nicked.

Holds gold to her eyes and sees
Hatchings faint as bars.

The finger, slender, even more
Diminished by its circle,

Seeking, moves slowly
Over the covers.

Breath alone defines
Within without.

Tiptoe close, look on, wait.
Last courtesies remove restraints.

On the mantel the prayer wheel whirls
Red under the white crane's grasp.

—CELIA GILBERT

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THE CURRENT CINEMA

Impostor

PAUL MAZURSKY's new comedy, "Moon Over Parador," is awkward, dopey, and very likable. Its premise—an actor impersonating the dictator of a Latin-American country—derives from a 1939 Paramount picture called "The Magnificent Fraud," which starred Akim Tamiroff. Mazursky and his screenwriting partner, Leon Capetanos, have updated the material, but a slightly musty old-Hollywood air clings to the movie: the idea is gimmicky, the satire is obvious and relatively apolitical, and the "exotic" setting—the picture was filmed on location in Brazil—is as stubbornly unreal as any studio re-creation. And Mazursky's direction is clunky and functional, like a B-movie hack's. "Moon Over Parador" isn't up to the standards set by "Blume in Love," "Harry and Tonto," "Next Stop, Greenwich Village," and "Down and Out in Beverly Hills," yet it's unmistakably a Mazursky film, and far from a dead loss. Watching this movie is a

little like watching a routine studio-era comedy on TV: once we've figured out (it doesn't take long) that the movie isn't going to be terribly good—that we're going to have to make a few allowances—we can have some fun anyway, as long as it has a cheerful spirit, a lively performer or two, and a half-decent joke every now and then. (Moviegoing teaches us to settle for what we can get.) What carries us past this film's many infelicities—erratic pace and shaky plot construction, clumsy staging of several key scenes—is Mazursky's affection for actors. He seems to love everything about them, their ridiculous qualities perhaps most of all, and he can't stop making jokes about the absurdities of the actor's life. The movie is disappointing, frustratingly unfocussed, yet somehow charming: it's a lot like most actors, come to think of it.

As Jack Noah, the actor who's roped into playing the dictator, Richard Dreyfuss is wonderful—and it's a good

thing he is, because he's in almost every scene. Jack is a fortyish Jewish actor who's having a middling-successful New York-type career: he auditions for parts in serious plays, like Public Theatre productions, and sometimes gets them (if Mandy Patinkin isn't available); he does an occasional movie, in which his character invariably gets killed; when he's recognized, people call him by the name of a character he once played on a daytime soap. He's anxious, hyper, paranoid, vain about his craft, a little self-important, defensively good-humored, and highly susceptible to flattery. In Parador to film a cheesy thriller, he looks hilariously uncomfortable in a Don Johnson suit and wig, but he gives his big death scene everything he's got; he even begs the director for another take. (The director, who just wants to wrap the picture, wearily refuses.) With no work waiting for him back home, he stays in Parador for a few days after the shoot and, through a series of contrivances, is offered the job of pretending to be the country's President, Alphonse Simms, a fat, drunken puppet who has died at a very inconvenient time both for Parador's ruling families and for the C.I.A. From that point on, the movie ambles along, watching Dreyfuss playing Jack playing Simms. The central joke isn't that politics is theatre but that Jack treats this volatile situation *as if* it were simply an acting challenge, way off Broadway: he sees everything in actors' terms. His initial resistance to taking the role weakens when the sinister chief of police (Raul Julia) pulls out one of Jack's best notices from the *Times*. Jack, who has every good word ever written about him committed to memory ("Do you have the review of when I played Biff? It said I was resonant and ferocious"), is suddenly receptive. Before his first speech as Simms, to a plaza full of Paradorians, he bitches nervously about the lack of rehearsal time. But the applause of the huge crowd energizes him; revelling in the audience's love, he starts getting into the role, and becomes so carried away that he allows himself to improvise. (His improvisations are touchingly lame. Reaching for rhetorical showstoppers, he finds himself intoning sentimental lyrics from "September Song" and "The Impossible Dream.") Accepting congratulations from Julia afterward, he says, modestly, "I went for it."



Eric Teitelbaum

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Richard Dreyfuss certainly goes for it. He clowns shamelessly, but he creates a real character. There probably isn't another actor who could make Jack Noah so transparently full of himself and yet so appealing. Mazursky and Capetanos have given him plenty of funny things to do, and he makes the most of his opportunities. There's a terrific scene in which Jack, trying to relax with the *Sunday Times* in the Presidential cabaña, reads the Arts and Leisure section and suddenly explodes with frustration: "I could be brilliant in this play!" And later, when Jack-as-Simms actually makes an attempt to reform the corrupt nation, Dreyfuss shows us that this liberal righteousness is both sweet and terminally vain: it's the ultimate actor's fantasy of doing something *significant*. As long as "Moon Over Parador" sticks to these knowing riffs on the psychology of the theatrical life, and showcases Dreyfuss's sly, exuberant performance, it's very entertaining. Unfortunately, the mythical setting and the complicated plot require Mazursky to devote a lot of energy to aspects of moviemaking he isn't awfully good at, like story construction and the engineering of spectacle. His best movies are so loose that they seem improvised; they rely on sensibility and timing rather than technique. This premise is just too elaborate for him. He has so many crowd scenes to handle, so much Paradorian paraphernalia to keep track of, so many scrapes to get his hero out of, that he loses his timing. Even his touch with the actors seems less sure than usual (with the exception of Dreyfuss, of course, and also of Sonia Braga, who's surprisingly winning as the dictator's hot-number mistress). He allows Raul Julia, as a blond Fascist named Roberto Strausmann, to get away with a performance that's too strenuously creepy to be very funny; he casts the great Fernando Rey as Simms' manservant and then forgets about him; Jonathan Winters plays an ugly American, and Mazursky gives him almost nothing to work with—just a chronic case of diarrhea and an oversexed wife.

Mazursky himself plays the dictator's mother, a bad-tempered, bow-legged horror in a short black dress, and practically steals his own movie. Watching his gleeful drag act, we can feel how much he loves to perform, and can almost imagine that he has directed

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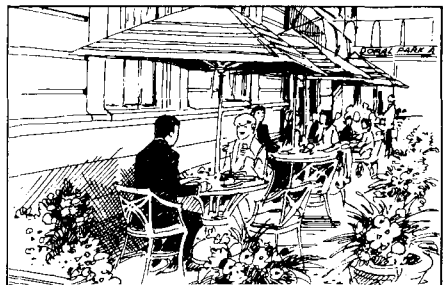
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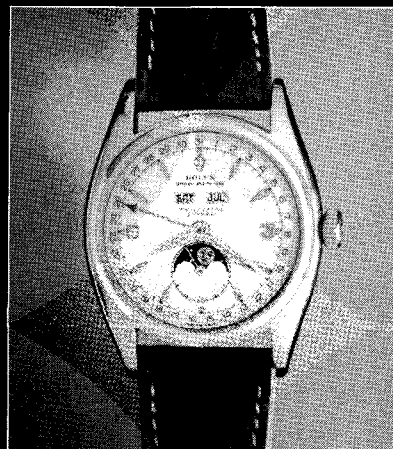
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this movie slackly out of some bizarre sense of solidarity with his actor-hero. Mazursky, gamely, seems to share Jack Noah's rather cynical perspective on directors. When Strausmann snarls, "Play the part or I'll kill you," the actor takes it calmly: he nods, and replies, with some awe, "You'd make a very good director." Even though this picture obviously needs a firmer—a more Teutonic—hand to guide it, Paul Mazursky isn't about to become *that* kind of director. For most of "Moon Over Parador," he seems content to stare wistfully at Dreyfuss, who, although he's at the mercy of the director, is having a lot more fun.

SIDNEY LUMET probably doesn't threaten the lives of his actors, but the performers in his new movie, "Running on Empty," look trapped and miserable all the same. Lumet kills with negligence. This glum fiasco gives the impression that the shoot was just a race to the wrap party. (He's like the director in "Parador," who can't be bothered to give Jack Noah a second take of his death scene.) Lumet has never been an especially stylish or careful director, but in the sixties and the early seventies his movies usually had tremendous drive and often had sensational acting. He reached a peak in 1975, with "Dog Day Afternoon," and it's been downhill ever since. He still chooses big, "significant" subjects and hires talented actors—and he seems to think that that's all he has to do. Maybe Lumet, socially conscious artist that he is, simply took the late-seventies energy crisis a bit too seriously: even when he doesn't have to run on empty, when he has an interesting story and a good cast—a full tank—he turns off the ignition and coasts.

With a little care, "Running on Empty" might have been a fascinating picture. Naomi Foner's screenplay is about the problems of a fugitive family: Mom and Dad (Christine Lahti and Judd Hirsch) have been on the run since 1971, when, as student activists, they helped blow up a campus building—not knowing that there was a man inside. They move from town to town, all over the country, changing their names and their looks every time, taking menial jobs, so they won't draw attention to themselves, and trying to raise their sons (River Phoenix and Jonas Abry) in the same relative safety of anonymity. It's a terrific idea: a pair

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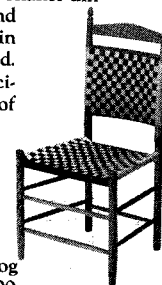
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of radicals, who wanted to "make a difference" and change the world, forced to live out a kind of grim parody of Middle American conformity, an existence wholly defined by the kids and the bills. They're forbidden by their circumstances to distinguish themselves. Foner's script manufactures a fairly plausible crisis for the underground family: the older son, seventeen-year-old Danny (Phoenix), is a musical prodigy, and a sympathetic teacher at his new high school has taken notice—he's pushing hard to get the boy into Juilliard.

The parents, of course, are panicked, and the teenager is torn: he wants to go, but he doesn't want to blow his family's cover.

You wouldn't think that it would be difficult to keep an audience interested in a story that's so unusual and so potentially rich in ironies. Hirsch and Lahti are skillful, experienced actors, and Phoenix, although he isn't particularly resourceful, has at least had plenty of practice with roles like this one: he has played the confused son of a crackpot adventurer in "The Mosquito Coast" and an all-American boy who discovers that his parents are Russian spies in "Little Nikita." (Surely he's getting tired of flashing wise, hurt, older-than-his-years looks at embarrassing parents in movie after movie.) But Lumet buries everything that's original about Foner's story, and leaves the hardworking performers bogged down in the mess, spinning their wheels. There's not a moment in this movie that feels authentic, not a scene that isn't marred by some jarring detail or inept camera placement (the director's favorites seem to be extreme long shots and gigantic, pore-enlarging closeups) or the omission of basic information that would make the characters' emotions comprehensible. It's bad enough that the movie suggests that Phoenix has developed his genius as a classical pianist using nothing but a soundless practice board, or that when Lahti sees her father for the first time in years they meet in a fancy Manhattan restaurant—where this prosperous-looking man must surely be known—and not in, say, a bus station or a suburban greasy spoon. These little things nag at us, and distract us, but what's really inexcusable is that the relationships within the family are almost entirely incoherent. Lumet gives



us endless shots of the sensitive teenager reacting to what's going on in his peculiar household, without ever making clear what it is he's reacting to. We have almost no sense of the parents' marriage. At times, we're sure that they stay together only for the children's sake; at other times, we're signalled to believe that they have some stronger (unspecified) bond. Does it mean anything that Hirsch looks a good ten years older than Lahti? Did their college romance begin as a teacher-student relationship? Are we

supposed to be picking up a clue to the deep structure of this family unit? It's probably just another lazy anomaly, like the fierce antagonism between Hirsch and Phoenix at the beginning of the movie, which is weirdly pointed and then left unexplained. (When, later on, father and son seem to interact normally, we're totally baffled.) What we need to know, for this story to make any sense at all, is the minute particulars of this family's day-to-day operations, the principles that enable it to go on. Lumet doesn't trouble with such details.

He's too busy pumping the story full of gross, Oscar-worthy sentimentality—no matter if the emotional content of the "shattering" drunk scene, the "tender" young-love scenes, the "touching" reconciliation, or whatever, seems to come out of nowhere. He's so intent on going for the big moment that he utterly deforms the story. The fact that the underground family has a talented son isn't really any more than a modestly clever plot device: it forces the issues. But Lumet tries to convince us that Danny's artistic ability is the point of the story. The camera circles swooningly around Phoenix whenever he's at the piano, and lingers reverently on the image of Lincoln Center as the boy emerges from his Juilliard audition. Lumet's awestruck attitude toward creativity is unsavory: he uses Danny's talent to validate the seriousness of the boy's plight—as though his problems would be less deserving of our attention if he weren't a prodigy. (Lumet shows no interest at all in the genius's ten-year-old brother; he's no more than an adorable prop at the kitchen table.) The actors don't have a prayer. Hirsch is humiliatingly miscast; Lahti, whose strength is her natural, unactorish warmth, is



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photographed monotonously, and we never quite get a fix on her character; Phoenix looks lost; even Martha Plimpton, whose fresh, lively readings and expressions as Danny's girlfriend give some spark to her early scenes, is finally undone by a series of weepy, earnest heart-to-hearts with Phoenix.

Lumet really outdoes himself in the scene of Lahti's birthday party, a sequence of mounting horror. Mom and Dad and the kids and the girlfriend are all sitting around wearing poignantly festive looks (and—except for Phoenix—party hats), the cute gifts are presented, one by one, and then, just when we think we're about to make it past another dreary meaningful moment, the worst happens. Hirsch flips on the stereo, and everyone, obviously feeling foolish enough already in those paper hats, begins to dance and sing along—to James Taylor's sensitive-guy anthem "Fire and Rain." The camera just sits there, and the director doesn't cut, almost daring the actors to look as if they were enjoying themselves, as the music drips on and on and on. By the time it's over, we're so embarrassed for everyone on the screen that we're barely able to look at them for the rest of the movie. And Lumet actually reprises this nightmare hootenanny as the end credits roll—to haunt us with that rueful sixties-are-over feeling. With directors like this, actors don't need enemies. —TERRENCE RAFFERTY

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MUSICAL EVENTS

Tanglewood

ELLIOTT CARTER was the composer specially honored at Tanglewood's 1988 Festival of Contemporary Music, and Hans Werner Henze was the composer-in-residence. At an orchestral concert, Carter's "Remembrance"—the third new piece of his to appear in his eightieth-birthday year—had its first performance (and, immediately thereafter, its second). The score bears the dedication "In memory of a great patron and believer in music of our time, Paul Fromm." Mr. Fromm (who died in 1987) and the Fromm Music Foundation (which commissioned "Remembrance," the latest of the many works it has brought into being) were long associated with new music at Tanglewood; the new-music festival, which was celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary, was until 1984 commonly referred to as "Fromm Week."

"Remembrance" lasts about five minutes, and is a monologue for solo trombone, accompanied by a large orchestra. The trombone "Oraison funèbre" in Berlioz's *Symphonie Funèbre et Triomphale* comes to mind; the solo trombone in the "Tuba mirum" movement of Mozart's *Requiem*; and perhaps the big solo in Mahler's *Third Symphony*. The solemn, noble tones of the instrument are stirring. It is a born orator. Its utterance in "Remembrance" is neither pompous nor sentimental but thoughtful, ardent, and gravely impassioned. Although the solo trombone—its wide-ranging line was eloquently played by John DiLutis—is dominant, the whole orchestra is active and involved. Sometimes a bass clarinet joins with the soloist. Sometimes the solo line touches on notes of a sustained accompanying chord, acquiring with each a different timbre doubling. The

string writing is particularly rich. Tall, intricate chords shine through five octaves and more; individual crescendos and decrescendos shift the specific gravity without altering the pitch content. The strings are divided at the close into twenty-five parts.

Before "Remembrance," there was Carter's "A Celebration of Some 100×150 Notes" (1986), the extended "fanfare" that moves eventfully through many exciting orchestral landscapes. After "Remembrance," Henze's "Seven Love Songs" (1984-1985), for cello and orchestra, had its American première. Henze's first cello concerto (1953) is entitled "Ode to the West Wind," and Shelley provided its program. "Seven Love Songs" is, in effect, his second cello concerto, a "setting" of seven love poems, which, the composer says in a program note, he has "analyzed in content and structure and translated into music, really quite in the sense of song composition gradually converted into instrumental music." He adds, "The identity of the texts will not be revealed." There is a

Shakespeare sonnet secretly embedded in the finale of Henze's *Second Piano Concerto*. There is a Hölderlin poem, unheard except instrumentally, in his *Seventh Symphony*. One day, the sort of detective work that discovered the Baudelaire poem, translated by Stefan George, that is "set" in the finale of Berg's *Lyric Suite* will need to be applied to Henze. Meanwhile, "Seven Love Songs" can be enjoyed as a suite of effectively contrasted movements—scored by a master and filled with ravishing sounds. The first and last movements made the deepest impression. The last contains imagery evoking a keyboard player; amorous reflections interrupt digital activity. I wondered whether Shakespeare's Sonnet 128 was the concealed poem but could not make "How



oft when thou, my music, music play'st" fit the rhythm of the cello's opening tune. Yo-Yo Ma was a generous, winning soloist, and the composer conducted.

The concert continued with Jorge Liderman's "For Orchestra," a new work, commissioned by the Tanglewood Music Center. Liderman, born in Buenos Aires in 1957, was a Composition Fellow at Tanglewood last year. I found his piece dense and unengaging. The program concluded with Colin Matthews' Fourth Sonata for Orchestra (1974-1975), originally subtitled "Green & Gold & Blue & White." (The subtitle, the composer said in a program note, is now discarded, but he mentioned it all the same.) This was a mysterious revival. Matthews, born in London in 1946, is now an admirable composer, best known in this country for his Fifth Sonata for Orchestra, subtitled "Landscape" (1977-81), and his Cello Concerto (1983-84). These two rewarding works are coupled on a Unicorn disk. The noisy Fourth Sonata, though it caused a certain stir when it appeared, now sounds dated. Matthews—like many other people—had been beguiled for a time by the process music of Steve Reich and Terry Riley. With the Fourth Sonata, he says, he "got process out of my system."

The Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra was conducted by Oliver Knussen. Tanglewood is an exhilarating, inspiring place to visit. The Theatre-Concert Hall, in which the new-music concerts are given, is no acoustic miracle. Sound leaks away. Mosquitoes bite. The metal seats are uncomfortable. The food in the adjacent cafeteria is no gourmet adventure. (Anyone with two and a half million dollars to spare can give his or her name to the new Theatre-Concert Hall that Tanglewood has planned.) But all this is forgotten in rapt, awed admiration of young performers who combine uncommon technical proficiency with ardent dedication. Carter's music is not easy to play. On the day before the orchestral concert, there was a program made mainly of his chamber music: four of his exquisitely fashioned, adventurous "tributes"—"Canon for 4" (for William Glock), "Riconoscenza" (for Goffredo Petrassi), "Esprit Rude/Esprit Doux" (for

Pierre Boulez), and "Enchanted Preludes" (for Ann Santen)—and then the Brass Quintet and the Triple Duo. It had been a halcyon New England day, spent at rehearsals and with old friends and new friends, talking about music. When this concert crowned it, I felt it had been one of the happiest days of my life. Most musicians have enchanted Tanglewood memories; this will become one of mine. Although all the players deserve individual mention, I single out a few



who shone with especial brightness: Margaret Bichteler, from Austin (violin); Scott Kluksdahl, from San Rafael (cello); Sharon Kam, from Tel Aviv (clarinet); Deborah Stephenson, from Dallas (horn); and Eric Zivian, from Toronto (piano). Mr. Zivian had already made his mark two days earlier, in a wonderfully intent and eloquent account of Busoni's Fantasia Contrappuntistica—in the two-piano version, with Judith Gordon, from Baltimore, as co-pianist.

György Kurtág's "Kafka Fragments" (1986), for soprano and violin, which has been widely performed in Europe, reached America in Frances-town, New Hampshire, as part of the Monadnock Music summer season, and was repeated at Tanglewood three days later. The soprano was Adrienne Csengery, Kurtág's regular interpreter, and the fiddler was Rolf Schulte. Earlier Kurtág cycles—"Messages of the Late R. V. Trussova," for soprano and ensemble; "Scenes from a Novel," for soprano, violin, double-bass, and cimbalom; "Attila József Fragments," for solo soprano—have been spare, lapidary, gestural. In "Kafka Fragments" the paring-down process is carried further still. I thought of Schoenberg's introduction to Webern's Bagatelles: "Consider what abstemiousness is needed to be so brief. Every glance can be extended into a poem, every sigh into a novel. But to express a novel in a single gesture, a joy in a single breath: such concentration is found only where self-pity is correspondingly absent." The text is a set of forty fragments drawn from Kafka's letters and diaries: phrases ("The seamstresses in the downpourings," "My prison cell—my fortress," "Nothing of the kind"); sentences ("For a moment I felt enamored," "The onlookers freeze as the

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train goes past"); occasionally, short runs of consecutive sentences ("The moonlight night dazzled us. Birds shrieked in the trees. There was a rush of wind in the fields. We crawled through the dust, a pair of snakes"). Most of the songs are very short, epigrammatic, concerned with a single image or idea. The text of the first is "The good march in step. Unaware of them, the others dance around them the dances of time." The violin plays a steady left-right, left-right alternation — C and D twenty-six times over. The voice strikes in a fifth above, keeps step for a moment, gets out of step, and then breaks away in fanciful, darting declamation.

Kurtág's method of composition seems to be largely instinctive. One has the feeling that the fragments are the chosen survivors from a much bigger collection, that those chosen were then refined and polished, and that great care has gone into their ordering. There are close approaches to the sententious ("The closed circle is pure," represented by seven notes from the soprano and fourteen from the violin, opening as a canon and closing in concord) and to the arty ("Once I broke my leg; it was the most wonderful experience of my life"), but Kurtág has a saving sense of humor, and so has Miss Csengery. She is a dazzling performer: vivid and various; now passionate, now playful; able to range through three octaves in full command of timbre and volume. The writing for the violin is as resourceful and inventive as that for the voice. Mr. Schulte's playing was dexterous and urgent, but he was less of a stage presence than his colleague: the musical give-and-take was sure, but in the give-and-take of glances Mr. Schulte seemed strangely unresponsive to the fascinating soprano. The cycle is in four parts and lasts seventy minutes or so; it was performed with small pauses between the parts but no intermission.

There is, of course, another festival at Tanglewood, held in the big Music Shed, where the Boston Symphony plays to a large audience while thousands more people picnic on the lawns around, listening to the music from loudspeakers. Leonard Bernstein, in his seventieth-birthday year, was prominent as composer and conductor in the programs. The two festivals came together in a performance of

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Henze's Seventh Symphony (1983-84) by the Boston Symphony, conducted by Seiji Ozawa. I wrote about this large, questing, deliberately disturbing composition when the same performers brought it to Carnegie Hall last year. It is a remarkable piece—Henze's first full-scale, romantic symphony, intended to provide virtuoso orchestras (it was commissioned by the Berlin Philharmonic) and their audiences with a modern successor to adventurous works of the past. It was warmly received.

In the Theatre-Concert Hall, the young Fellows of the Tanglewood Music Center revived Henze's 1961 opera "Elegy for Young Lovers." "Theatre" in the hall's name is something of a misnomer; the orchestra pit was filled in years ago. On the front of the concert platform the setting of an Alpine inn was simply suggested, while the orchestra was placed at the back of the platform. I heard more of the Auden-Kallman text than I had in any previous production of the piece, and the instruments were excellently audible, too. "Elegy" has worn well. On a realistic level, the plot seems hokey, even preposterous. As an allegory about sacrificing the decencies of life to the dictates of art, it remains arresting; the nonrealistic—even "critical"—stagings of the opera have been the most successful. As an elegant framework for a profusion of exquisite musical numbers in varied forms and varied manners, the libretto is masterly. The Tanglewood performance, conducted by Gustav Meier, was musically refined and very good to hear. The acting was unsure. Special praise for Lisa Saffer, who was accurate and sweet-toned in Hilda Mack's dotty coloratura, and for Dominique Labelle, a lustrous Elisabeth.

—ANDREW PORTER

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—Belleville (Ill.) News-Democrat.

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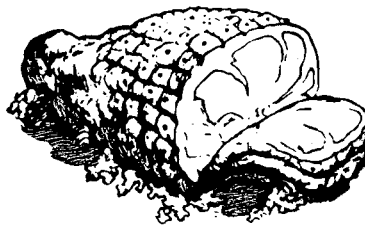
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LETTER FROM NEW DELHI

“**E**XCELLENT!” I cried. ‘Elementary,’ said he.” This exchange between Dr. Watson and Sherlock Holmes keeps coming to mind when one is in New Delhi, the capital of a country with about eight hundred million people, or a sixth of the world’s population. Everywhere, there are signs of the excellent progress that India has made in the forty-one years since Independence. Not so long ago, television was a novelty available to few, and television programs were little more than amateurish radio newscasts with pictures. This year, it is estimated, from fifty to seventy million people watched two ambitious television series and a historical drama about the Partition of India. That is also close to the estimated number of consumers here with some disposable income, and the demand for everything has so outstripped the supply that for most goods there are government lists of numbers and priorities. (There is a five-year wait in Delhi to get a telephone and telephone connection.) By Western standards, consumers here live very modestly, but their increasing numbers are a testament to India’s high rate of economic growth in the last decade and to its ranking as the ninth industrial power in the world.

The monsoon failed last year, and

as a result the country suffered perhaps its worst drought in a hundred years. In the fifties and sixties, a less severe drought would have led to famine conditions. The government would have been forced to spend its much needed foreign exchange on foreign foodstuffs. There would have been pleas for foreign aid. But the coming of the green revolution in the seventies and eighties—the construction of dams and canals, the electrification of villages, the drilling of wells, and the improvement in seed strains, fertilizers, storage facilities, transportation, and distribution networks—has meant that, while there were food shortages, high inflation, and seething discontent, there was no famine. This seems nothing less than a miracle when one remembers that since Independence India’s population has more than doubled.

The drought created a severe water shortage almost everywhere. In the middle of the drought, the water from the Yamuna River, one of the main sources of Delhi’s supply, was diverted by the neighboring state of Haryana to farms within its boundaries, worsening the effects of the drought upon the capital. Many neighborhoods didn’t have water for more than three or four hours a day, and even when they did

the water didn’t have much pressure. (In the desert state of Rajasthan, only a hundred miles to the east, women were walking as far as five miles a day in the hot sun and waiting in line for hours to get a bucket of water.) To supplement the municipal water supply, many affluent people were forced to drill wells, but the water table had dropped and the wells had to be drilled ever deeper. The government was reduced to taking out pathetic advertisements in newspapers, contending that Delhi had the first claim on the country’s water. “CAPITAL’S HISTORIC CLAIM” was the head on one such advertisement, and it continued:

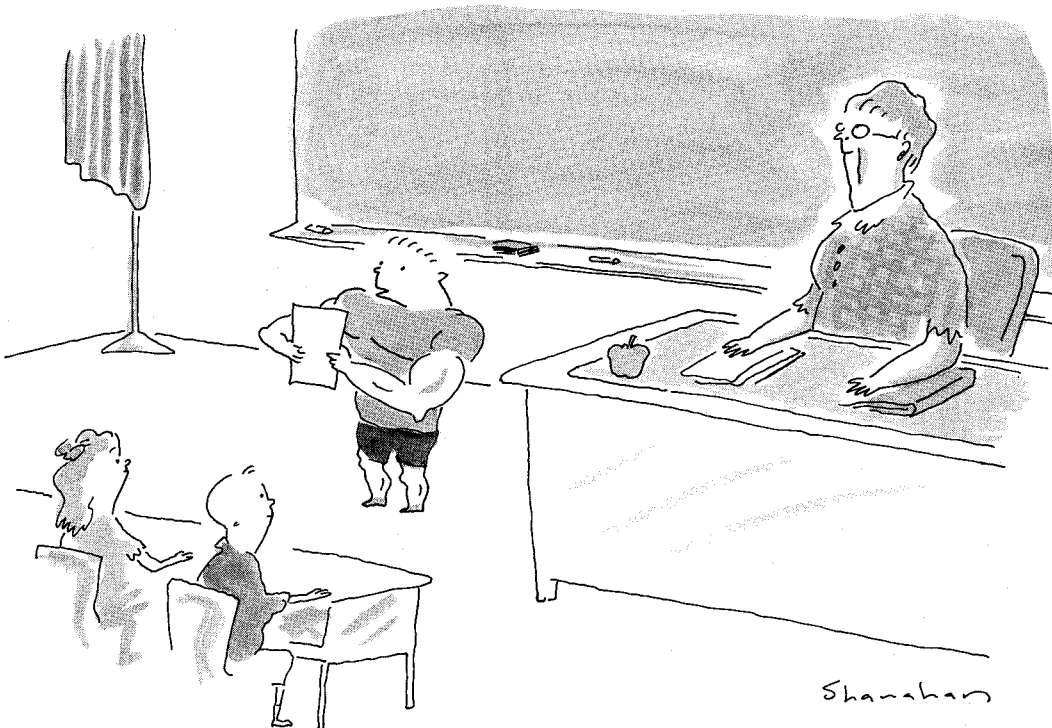
It is no accident that civilization first dawned along the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates, or that the civilizations of Egypt and India developed in the valleys of the Nile and Indus. . . . Delhi is situated and has grown on the banks of the Yamuna. So, according to all conventions, Delhi should have the top priority to get raw water from the river. But it is the last to get it. Delhi keeps on persuading the neighbouring States for raw water. It is overlooked by the States that the city of Delhi was older than all the irrigation systems encircling it. . . . Delhi as the National Capital belongs to the country. It is, therefore, the moral obligation of all the States to look after its well-being. Particularly, the neighbouring States should stand by the Capital in its need for water which is crucial to human life. Their cooperation will be appreciated by lakhs [hundreds of thousands] of people. . . . In Delhi, enough flow is not always available in the river Yamuna to run the existing

Water Treatment Plants. . . . Delhi’s requirements of water supply should [be] given priority over demands of water for irrigation purposes. . . . To be fair to Delhi, the neighbouring States of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh should provide additional raw water to Delhi to meet its minimum requirements of potable water.

If you have any suggestions to strengthen Delhi’s case for more water, please send them to:

Jag Parvesh Chandra
Chief Executive Councillor
Delhi Administration,
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In the past, most state governments were under the control of the ruling Congress Party, and the central government simply ordered them to do its bidding. Now many states are under opposition governments, and these take every opportunity to embarrass New Delhi. So the adver-



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tisements publicized only the impotence of the central government and the spreading fear in the capital that if, say, the monsoon were to fail this year, too, the country would be ravaged by famine and disease. As it happened, this year's monsoon rains were plentiful. (As is often the case, they caused fatal floods in some parts of the country.) But the drought awakened people to the realization that since Independence there had been something wrong with the whole system of national priorities, under which, year after year, the government devoted a major portion of its budget to defense—including, some speculate, the building of an atomic bomb—at the expense of meeting age-old needs for clean air, safe drinking water, and the disposal of human waste. And it is said that the excellent strides in industry and agriculture have been made at the expense of what Sherlock Holmes would have called the elementary requirements of the people.

Since the capital serves as the showcase for the country's progress, more attention and money, as a matter of course, are spent on meeting these elementary needs here than in most other cities. Indeed, once upon a time people in Delhi took pride in their healthful drinking water, deriding foreign visitors for boiling the water even to brush their teeth. They joked about "Delhi belly," mild temporary stomach upsets that people got occasionally, and boasted about how much better off they were than people living in Calcutta, say, who had to drink water sometimes infected with sewage, and so suffered from chronic amoebic dysentery and a variety of mysterious fevers and viruses. Now the drinking water in Delhi is threatening to become almost as undependable as that in Calcutta. This year, certainly, a lot of people seem to be afflicted with chronic dysentery and other illnesses. There has also been an epidemic of cholera—something previously unheard of here. And people who could were boiling their drinking water even in the relatively disease-free winter months. A continuing water shortage has exacerbated the perennial problem of the disposal of human waste—the main source of disease. As in Calcutta, people who are fortunate enough to have the convenience of toilets complain that there is no water to flush them; the railway tracks, which most poor people use as

latrines, seem to be cleaned even less frequently than they were in the past. Again as in Calcutta, the air here is choked with soot, grit, and dust. Actually, the combination of the growth in population, increased road traffic, the use of outmoded vehicles, a boom in construction, and the installation of an electric power station in the heart of the city has given Delhi the distinction of being, with Mexico City and Tokyo, one of the most polluted cities in the world.

As usual, one is struck by how cheerful and resilient both the rich and the poor are. The support system of family, servants, government jobs, and a growing economy seems to keep people going. But the city as a whole seems run-down, discouraged, and sickly. And, from what one reads, the situation in other Indian cities, not to mention villages, is worse. It is as if Calcutta were a sign of the country's future.

WHEN I was here in 1985, Indians, who like to seek refuge from their miserable reality in what they see as the glamour of everything foreign, were comparing their newly elected Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, with the newly chosen General Secretary of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev. It was said that, like Gorbachev, Rajiv, as he is called here, understood that he could coast along if he accepted the political and economic system he had inherited, but that he believed the good of the country required him to open the economy to free enterprise, introduce a modern, streamlined management style, democratize and revitalize the ruling party (in Rajiv's case, the Congress Party), and clean up corruption—attack his country's basic political and economic problems, whatever the personal or political cost. Indeed, the term *perestroika* was sometimes used for Rajiv's new political and economic order. Now people rarely mention Rajiv in the same breath as Gorbachev, and they tell this fable about Rajiv's *perestroika*:

A fox looks up and sees a crow flying backward. "Brother, why are you flying backward?" he asks.

"Haven't you heard about *perestroika*?" the crow replies. "Everyone must go backward to capitalism in order to get ahead in socialism—that's the new order."

The fox thereupon runs backward straight into a bear, who mauls him

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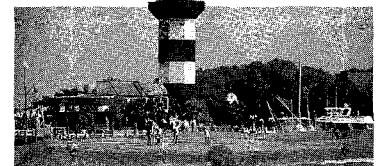
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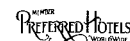
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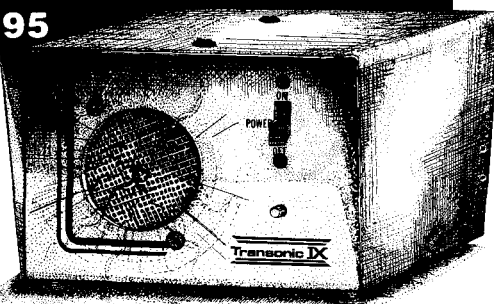


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and chews off one of his legs. The fox says to the crow, "Brother, why are you still flying backward? Look at what happened to me."

"Haven't you heard, brother?" the crow says. "*Perestroika* is only for the upper echelons."

EARLY in 1986, the *Indian Express*, the most widely read English-language national daily, published articles alleging that the chairman of Reliance Industries, Dhirubhai Ambani, who was a business titan and was thought to be a major contributor to the Congress Party, had illegally imported machinery, and Rajiv's government had looked the other way. The articles clearly implied that, as always, money could buy off the government. Ambani was locked in corporate warfare with another business titan—Nusli Wadia, the chairman of Bombay Dyeing. And Wadia was a friend of Ramnath Goenka, the rich owner of the *Indian Express*. The articles were dismissed by some as a plant by Wadia to embarrass Ambani, but a financial adviser to the *Indian Express*, S. Gurumurthy, wouldn't let the story die. He claimed to have many documents substantiating the allegations. In any event, in October, 1986, the Finance Minister, Vishwanath Pratap Singh, quietly authorized the Fairfax Group, a private American management-consultant firm specializing in detective work, to look into the allegations. V. P. Singh's action was bold, unprecedented, and politically hazardous, for any involvement of an American agency in Indian affairs was bound to raise the spectre of the C.I.A., which had been a scapegoat in Indian politics for a long time, especially since its well-publicized role in overthrowing Prince Sihanouk in Cambodia, in 1970, and President Allende in Chile, in 1973.

In January of 1987, V. P. Singh's authorization of the Fairfax investigation became known, whereupon Rajiv, who had not been consulted about it, abruptly transferred him out of the Finance Ministry, and what the Fairfax Group had uncovered was not divulged. Getting V. P. Singh out of the Finance Ministry might have been only an expression of Rajiv's pique that Singh hadn't talked to him before involving a foreign agency in Indian affairs. Or it might have been an example of what newspapers here have

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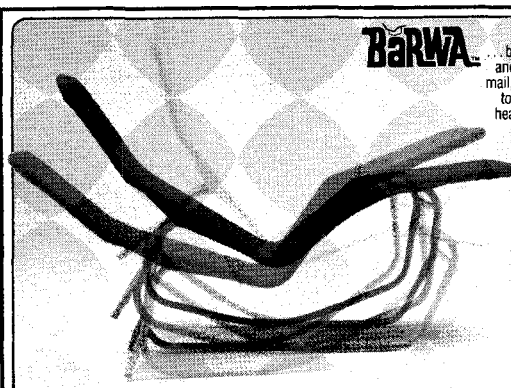
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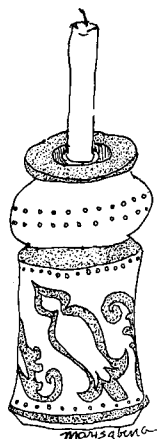
called his increasingly immature, erratic behavior; a couple of days earlier, he had all but dismissed the Secretary of External Affairs during a press conference. But it started a damaging rumor that Fairfax had unearthed evidence of payments—kickbacks—to government agents by foreign companies for securing them defense contracts; that some of these kickbacks had been paid to the actor Amitabh Bachchan, who was famous for his roles in countless popular films as an anti-establishment Angry Young Man; and that, in violation of Indian foreign-currency rules, Amitabh's kickbacks had been stashed in secret Swiss bank accounts by his brother Ajitabh. (Ajitabh Bachchan had taken up residence in Switzerland the previous year.) Amitabh Bachchan was one of the closest friends of the Gandhi-Nehru family, and, as a result, he had easily won election to a safe Congress seat from Allahabad, the family's home town. At the time of Singh's exit from the Finance Ministry, Rajiv was not only Prime Minister but also Defense Minister, and a rumor got going that Amitabh Bachchan was keeping some of the money for Rajiv and that Singh had kept Rajiv in the dark about Fairfax because he himself was under investigation. Singh, for his part, insisted that his authorization of the Fairfax investigation was within his mandate from Rajiv to root out corruption wherever it existed. In any case, the impression that Rajiv was shielding his friends became popularly accepted.

On the heels of Singh's exit, Girilal Jain, the editor of what was ordinarily the country's most pro-government English-language daily, the *Times of India*, published a biting signed editorial attacking Rajiv for seeing himself not as first among equals but as "king-emperor." Jain thought that Rajiv exercised wider powers, and exercised them more easily, than either Gorbachev or Deng Xiaoping, and that this betokened a grave weakness in the Indian democratic system. His editorial was one of many lambasting Rajiv.

A couple of months earlier, during the *Indian Express* and Reliance Industries controversy, Parliament, despite a press outcry, had passed what was called the Indian Postal Act

(Amendment) Bill. It allowed the government to intercept and open private mail. The avowed purpose of the bill was to stem the tide of terrorist activities; the Sikh separatist movement in Punjab, where the majority of the fifteen million Sikhs in India live, had been rapidly growing more violent. In January of 1987, the President of India, Zail Singh, himself a Sikh, refused to sign the bill, maintaining that it violated the fundamental constitutional rights of Indian citizens. Between 1980 and 1982, Zail Singh had been Home Minister in Mrs. Gandhi's Cabinet, and at that time he had actually supported the introduction of the bill. Now he was apparently trying to take advantage of Rajiv's political troubles and score political points at his expense.

In contrast to previous Presidents, Zail Singh was essentially a small-time local Punjabi politician. Mrs. Gandhi had engineered his election to the Presidency in 1982 in the hope of winning the support of moderate Sikhs. But many of Mrs. Gandhi's followers had had little use for him. They contended that Zail Singh had been ineffective as the Congress Party chief minister of Punjab—an office he held between 1972 and 1977—and that when he then lost out to the Akali Dal, the Sikh religious party, he encouraged a rival fundamentalist movement. This was the movement that had ultimately spiralled out of control and led to the occupation by Sikh extremists of the Golden Temple, the holiest shrine of the Sikhs, in Amritsar, over many months in 1983 and 1984; it was Mrs. Gandhi's sending in troops in June, 1984, to rout the extremists—an attack in which more than a thousand Sikh "martyrs" died—that had radicalized the Sikhs and fanned the demand for a separate homeland. Although Zail Singh had supported Mrs. Gandhi's military operation, he went to the temple immediately afterward to do penance for it, thus giving the impression of running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. Then, in October of 1984, Mrs. Gandhi was assassinated by two of her Sikh security guards, who thought they were avenging her desecration of the temple. It has never been any secret that Zail Singh has viewed Rajiv, almost half his age, as a spoon-



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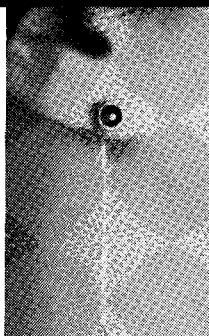
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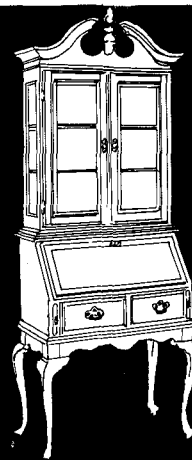
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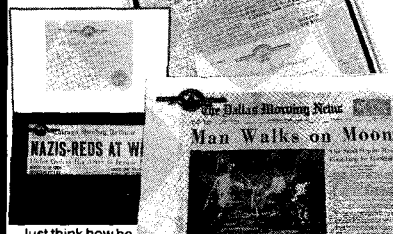


fed baby whose only claim to the Prime Ministership is that he is his mother's son. But Rajiv was the intended successor of his mother; within hours of her death he was nominated as Prime Minister by the bigwigs of her party, and Zail Singh had no recourse but to swear him in.

Once in office, however, Rajiv, instead of serving out his mother's unfinished term, which had a little more than a year to go, almost immediately called a general election, as if he were eager to validate at the polls his essentially dynastic succession. Because of his name and because he campaigned as incorruptible "Mr. Clean," he won for the Congress Party its biggest victory ever, securing eighty per cent of the seats in Parliament. It is said that in the first seven or eight months of his Prime Ministership he shut Zail Singh out of many official proceedings, most notably those concerning a subject in which, merely as a Sikh, Zail Singh could be deemed to have a natural interest. That was the riots in Delhi on the night of Mrs. Gandhi's assassination, during which more than three thousand Sikhs were killed, and their homes and businesses burned. A government report, prepared by a commission of inquiry headed by a Supreme Court justice, M. P. Thakkar, evidently corroborated the widespread assumption that Hindu Congress politicians had abetted, and even staged, some of the riots to avenge Mrs. Gandhi's death and the killings of Hindus by Sikhs in Punjab; people already knew that the Hindu police had stood idly by during the riots, thus becoming accomplices. Zail Singh was said to feel that he had been barred from official information and deliberations to which, as President, he had a right. Though a figurehead, he was Commander-in-Chief, and he had some residual powers, as the monarch does in the British parliamentary system, on which the Indian system is modelled. For instance, if two men had competing claims for the office of Prime Minister and it seemed that either could win a vote of confidence in Parliament, he could choose one over the other and force Parliament to vote on his choice. There was, however, no tradition of regular contact between the President and the Prime Minister in India, as there is in Britain, where the Prime Minister formally calls on the monarch every week for an "audience." Never-

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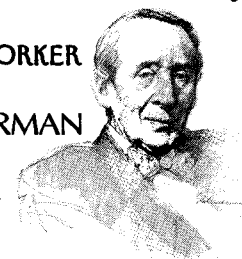
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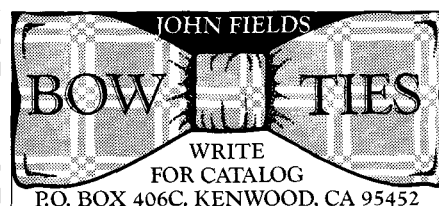


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theless, Indian Presidents, by and large, had been venerable national figures, and previous Prime Ministers had generally kept them informed, out of respect for both their persons and their office. Zail Singh believed that he was being discriminated against because he was a Sikh, and, indeed, people say that Rajiv gratuitously provoked a row with him. The result was that Zail Singh became a dangerous rallying point for the opposition parties and for Congress dissidents as a series of corruption scandals broke over Rajiv's head, the Fairfax scandal being the first.

On March 9, 1987, less than two months after V. P. Singh's exit from the Finance Ministry, Zail Singh wrote what he called a "private" letter to Rajiv. "The president/prime minister relationship in our country is governed by certain well-established practices and conventions besides express provisions of the Indian constitution," he wrote, and he went on to assert that in the previous two years these conventions had not been followed, and so he could not determine whether Rajiv was conducting the government in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the constitution. He seemed to be making their personal differences a constitutional issue and at the same time to be putting in doubt the constitutionality of Rajiv's conduct of his office. To make sure his letter would have the maximum public effect, he apparently leaked it to the *Indian Express*, and on March 13th it was splashed on the front page.

For some time, Arun Shourie, then the second-in-command of the *Indian Express*, and its conscience, had been the scourge of the government, and the publication of the letter was the final provocation. Immediately, the Central Bureau of Investigation, which generally deals with serious crimes, raided the house of the paper's owner, Ramnath Goenka. The government arrested S. Gurumurthy and seized several supposedly incriminating documents, alleging that they revealed illegalities having to do with the building in which the *Indian Express* was housed and with the paper's imported printing presses. By the government's own admission, the *Indian Express* violations had supposedly occurred over several years, so few could doubt that the timing and manner of the raid had more to do with political revenge than



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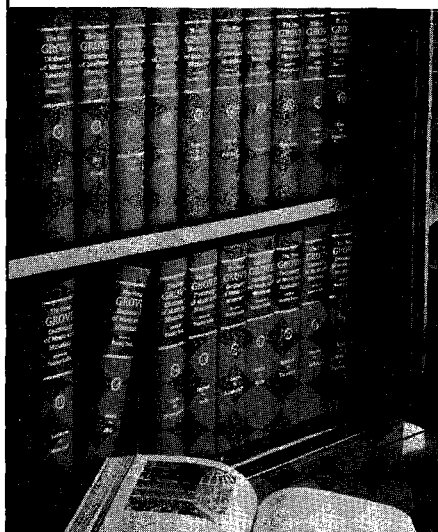
with any illegalities. The raid, which kept the *Indian Express* from publishing its Delhi edition for a hundred and seventeen days, was seen as an attempt to muzzle the press, and seemed to confirm growing popular suspicions that Rajiv was set on covering up corruption in his government.

Rajiv's crippling rows with the President and the press coincided with campaigns for midterm elections for state assemblies in three key states, a thousand miles apart: West Bengal, Kerala, and Jammu and Kashmir. Since the general election a little more than two years earlier, Rajiv had lost state elections in Karnataka, Punjab, and Assam, so it appeared that his popularity was falling precipitously and that his name, the Congress Party's biggest asset, was losing its lustre. As usual, the state elections were fought on local issues, but Rajiv seemed to turn them into a national referendum on his stewardship of the country. For instance, in West Bengal, where Jyoti Basu, who belonged to the pro-Chinese Communist Party (Marxist), was standing for a third term, Rajiv campaigned personally, as no Prime Minister before him had ever

done in any state, putting the prestige of his office on the line. The elections were held on March 23rd, and the Congress Party was all but routed. In West Bengal, it suffered an unprecedented third straight defeat, and it also lost Kerala, to a Communist-led coalition. Only in Jammu and Kashmir did it have a measure of success.

ON removing V. P. Singh from the Finance Ministry, in January, Rajiv had made him Defense Minister. In the middle of February, almost before Singh had settled into his new job, a report was brought to his notice that a huge kickback had been paid for the government's contract to purchase four submarines from a West German company, Howaldtswerke Deutsche Werft. The contract had been negotiated in 1980, while Mrs. Gandhi was Prime Minister. Around that time, she had ruled that all middlemen were to be dispensed with in the giving out of defense contracts, and that where the practice of paying a commission—a euphemism for kickback—to middlemen was standard the amount of the commission was to be deducted from the price the government paid for the

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contract. Then, in 1983, she had authorized the contract for the four submarines, at a cost of three hundred million dollars. It was now reported within the inner circles of the Defense Department that seven per cent, or twenty-one million dollars, had been paid to an Indian agent for that contract in installments between 1980 and 1987. And Rajiv had served as Defense Minister from October, 1984, through January, 1987. In Indian terms, the amount of the kickback was so large that it was generally believed no private citizen could have taken and kept the money for himself, and therefore it had to have been given either to the Congress Party or to the Gandhi family itself. In any case, for six weeks V. P. Singh did nothing about the report, which had the potential to besmirch the reputation not only of Rajiv and the Congress Party but also of Rajiv's late mother. Then, on April 2nd, as Rajiv's authority was being challenged by Zail Singh, Michael Hershman, the president of the Fairfax Group, gave a tantalizing interview to the *Statesman*, a highly respected English-language national daily, in which he said that V. P. Singh's removal as Finance Minister had come immediately after Fairfax informed the government that a "key witness" was about to give significant evidence of kickbacks. The witness, Hershman explained, had subsequently refused to testify. But Hershman was now on public record as all but saying that Singh's removal was part of Rajiv's coverup. Rajiv responded by replacing several of Singh's colleagues, who had shared the responsibility for the Fairfax investigation, with loyal new officials—an action that naturally caused newspapers and opposition leaders to charge that he was brazenly continuing the coverup. At the same time, he appointed M. P. Thakkar and another Supreme Court justice, S. Natarajan, to sit as a commission of inquiry on the Fairfax affair, charging them, however, to look into the conduct not of the government but of V. P. Singh and his colleagues. The Thakkar Commission, as it came to be called, was seen as an attempt to make sure that the scandal would not be examined too deeply—indeed, that it would be contained and whitewashed. Like Thakkar, Natarajan was known for his great reverence for Mrs. Gandhi. A few days after the appointment of the commission, V. P. Singh launched an inquiry

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into the submarine contract, once again without telling Rajiv. Immediately, the nature of the allegations was reported in the press, and Singh had no choice but to quit—he resigned as Defense Minister and left the Cabinet on April 12th—since he knew that he no longer enjoyed Rajiv's confidence. The upshot was that Singh became a martyr overnight, not only in India but in the world at large. The London *Times* noted that Singh's "personal incorruptibility made him stand out in a field crowded with racketeers." Closer to home, the *Indian Express* published an editorial on its front page, stating, "No Prime Minister has confirmed the worst allegations and suspicions about his probity as Mr. Rajiv Gandhi has." The editorial went on to say that V. P. Singh could not possibly have embarrassed Rajiv with his German-submarine inquiry unless Rajiv "or someone dear to him" had taken kickbacks. The editorial was one among many indications that Rajiv's reputation, as people like to say here, had fallen "to the bottom of the sea."

On April 16th, Rajiv sat impassively in Parliament while members of the opposition parties denounced his government as "steeped in corruption." (Three days later, an officer who was supposed to take charge of the four West German submarines shot himself, only increasing the sordidness of the scandal.) And also on April 16th the Swedish national radio came out with a charge that seemed to dwarf all previous scandals. It announced that in 1986 the Bofors unit of Nobel Industries Sweden AB, the largest arms manufacturer in Sweden, had agreed to pay kickbacks to senior Indian politicians and defense personnel to secure a contract for field guns, and had already paid a total of nearly five million dollars into an account, code-named Lotus, at the Schweizerischer Bankverein, in Geneva.

Negotiations for the Bofors field guns had begun in 1977—again, under Mrs. Gandhi. The contract had been authorized by Rajiv in 1986—again, when he was Defense Minister—and was for the purchase of four hundred towed howitzers at a cost of one and a third billion dollars. Indeed, he was said to have promoted the Bofors claim for its field gun over field guns built in

other countries. The Bofors scandal was perhaps the most unsavory in the history of corruption in independent India.

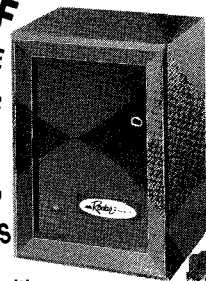
Throughout the rest of April and May, there was a flurry of statements by both the Indian and the Swedish governments and by Bofors, denying that any kickbacks had been paid, but few here gave the statements any credence. It was taken for granted that the two governments would try to protect each other, in order to maintain trade and good relations, and that Bofors would try to shield the Indian officials it had paid kickbacks to, in the hope of doing future business with them. On one occasion, in April, Rajiv, his senior Cabinet colleagues, the Congress chief ministers, and other Congress leaders met and passed a Party resolution that all but accused the United States and Pakistan of touching off the scandals in order to imperil Indian national security and thereby destabilize Indian democracy. A month later, Rajiv all but accused the United States of complicity in the assassination of his mother, saying at a Congress rally in Delhi, "Indira Gandhi was killed because she fought against imperialism and because she made India strong and independent. I vowed to continue her fight, and today we are in open confrontation with the same forces who destroyed her." The speech was an echo of speeches that his mother used to make whenever her government was beset by scandals or other deep political troubles: she would accuse the United States or the C.I.A. of working to destabilize Indian democracy in order to create chaos and establish in the place of her socialist government a right-wing, pro-Western, capitalist government. The strategy had

the effect of unifying factions behind her, but this time it didn't work. At one point, Rajiv came up with the alibi that he had discussed the Bofors contract with Sweden's Prime Minister Olof Palme and that Palme had assured him there would be no kickbacks. Since Palme was dead, that couldn't be corroborated, and so did Rajiv little good.

The Indian opposition and the press carried the day, and finally, at the end of April, the Swedish government directed Sweden's national audit bureau



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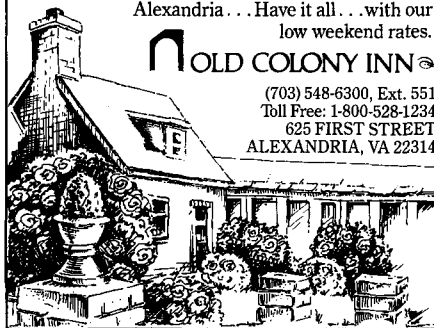
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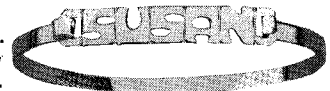
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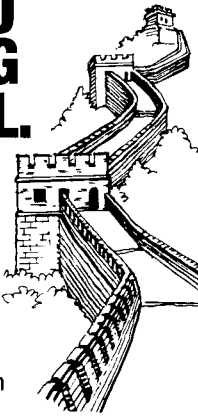
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to launch an investigation. This did not get very far, however, because Bofors, after making a show of cooperation, stonewalled. All the same, in June, the bureau issued a report. Some of its sections were classified, but its conclusion was made public: that an agreement between Rajiv's government and Bofors for the payment of commissions to middlemen had existed, and that the company had incurred a cost in paying those commissions. Thereupon, in parallel actions, Rajiv sent a mission to Switzerland, purportedly to try to find out the identity of the holder of any secret bank accounts, and the Swedish government appointed a public prosecutor to investigate the affair. But nothing came of either of these moves, and perhaps nothing could have: Rajiv's government was investigating itself, and, moreover, in Parliament it could easily dominate the opposition; the Swedish public prosecutor could not establish a prima-facie case against closemouthed Bofors. At any time, Rajiv could have cleared everything up by simply demanding that Bofors make public the names of people to whom it had paid kickbacks—a demand the company could hardly have ignored, since Rajiv retained the power to cancel its field-gun contract. Consequently, the belief took hold that Rajiv had something to hide—that his friends, at least, had "eaten money." (Food metaphors are commonly used in India, perhaps because starving off hunger is still the preoccupation of most of its people.) This belief was strengthened by a second interview Hershman gave to the *Statesman*, on July 27th, two months after the Fairfax Group was dismissed, in which he charged that at the time of the dismissal the investigation was about to confirm large-scale corruption in Rajiv's government, and that the appointment of the Thakkar Commission was "part of a cover-up being perpetrated by Mr. Gandhi." Hershman also stated that he knew a number of American firms doing business with India which had paid a "contribution" of five per cent of the value of their pending contracts to "offshore welfare funds." (In 1986, the International Monetary Fund had estimated that private Indian deposits in Swiss banks exceeded a billion dollars.)

A few days later, Rajiv made a solemn categorical statement in Parliament that neither he nor any member

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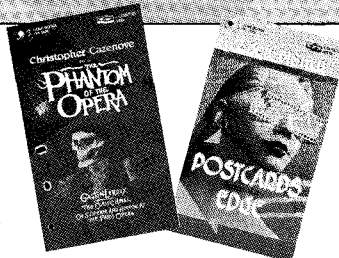
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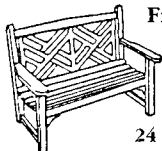
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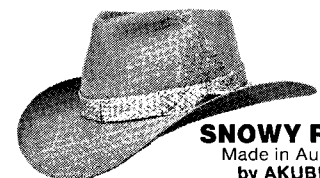
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of his family had received any consideration in the Bofors deal. Certainly there was no hard evidence that Rajiv had ever had his hand in the till, and even the circumstantial evidence implicating him was extremely thin. Many thoughtful people here believe that he either has been taken for a ride or has shown excessive loyalty to his friends.

But the Thakkar Commission's report, when it was issued, only heightened the storm. It stated, for instance, that any inquiry into the activities of economic offenders (a euphemism for purveyors of "black money," or money off the books) should be undertaken only by the Cabinet collectively, with the knowledge and sanction of the Prime Minister. The report noted:

The leaders of the world would not conduct their affairs vis-a-vis leaders under a cloud with the requisite degree of trust and confidence which are essential for arriving at a mutually advantageous long term relationship. The voice of such a handicapped country with such a handicapped leadership would become weak or inaudible or would not carry the same weight or inspire the same faith. The long term relationship in the spheres of trade, commerce, and industry would be prejudicially affected. It is therefore a specious argument that destabilising the leader of the party or the leadership in charge of the administration at a given point of time, will not result in destabilising the country. Such a situation could certainly result in great detriment to the national interest and national security.

Critics like Arun Shourie were quick to pounce on this passage, saying that it must have cheered the purveyors of black money, since a widespread government discussion of their activities would be bound to have many leaks, tipping them off, and, at the same time, would tie the hands of any independent investigator.

IN the early years of Independence, there was a certain idealism animating government socialist policies in India, and corruption, for the most part, was kept in check. For instance, during Jawaharlal Nehru's seventeen years as the country's first Prime Minister the ruling Congress Party generally solicited contributions in an open manner from businessmen and private individuals—anyone who could afford to give. These solicitations were considered a legitimate Party function, and contributions were made mainly by check, recorded, and accounted for.

A big change came about after In-

dira Gandhi became Prime Minister, in 1966. A feeling grew in her government that officials, to be really socialist and left-wing, should not be under obligation to business in any way. Contributions from big business to political parties were therefore banned. But elections became more and more expensive to wage and harder and harder to win, and politicians needed more money. They began accepting it from businessmen in cash, quietly, under the table. This black money often required the use of all kinds of middlemen, and they took their cuts or kickbacks along the way, because no accounts were kept of what money was paid, and to whom.

Another big change came about in 1975, when Mrs. Gandhi's second son, Sanjay, became an important force in the government. He saw to it that the kickbacks routinely made by overseas companies to get contracts were no longer made to middlemen; instead, the kickbacks were made directly to his minions or to Congress Party functionaries—what came to the same thing. Mrs. Gandhi's minister would wear his official hat during contract negotiations with representatives of a company, and then, on agreeing to award it a contract, would put on his Congress Party hat and add, "provided you give x amount of money to my party." Kickbacks, sometimes of as much as ten per cent, were automatically collected from foreign companies on most contracts negotiated by, among others, the Defense Department, the government's largest spender. Sanjay's rationale was: Why have any money siphoned off to middlemen when he and his party could have it all to themselves? Some of the money collected was laundered and used for election purposes, but the suspicion was that a good deal of it was salted away in undeclared foreign bank accounts, especially in Switzerland. Politicians used the money for all sorts of private purposes, it was said—to take foreign holidays, to buy foreign education for their children, to build a nest egg. A sort of symbiotic relationship developed between politicians and businessmen—businessmen at home and abroad. Politicians facilitated the doing of business by granting businessmen licenses and favors and overlooking their infractions of various government regulations, which grew right along with socialist rhetoric and socialist legislation, and businessmen filled the Party coffers. The system of



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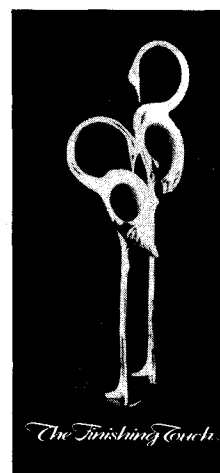
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kickbacks became so quickly and so deeply entrenched that after Sanjay's death, in a plane crash in 1980, Mrs. Gandhi's ministers justified it as a necessity for fighting and winning elections—for keeping India democratic. It seemed that there was no governmental or party activity which was not tainted with black money. Everyone, from the most important minister to the least important functionary, was on the take, or so it was at least popularly believed. The discussion was never about the principle of accepting kickbacks but about the size of the take of particular officials. No one questioned, for instance, the unfair advantage that the party in power gained by collecting money for its candidates. In fact, to be in Indian politics and remain incorruptible seemed as impossible as squaring the circle. And people in business started talking about kickbacks, Girilal Jain has written, "in terms of loot instead of corruption."

Still another big change came about in 1984, with the accession of Rajiv and his stated policy of cleaning up the government, which was apparently the fruit of a sincere wish. Most of his adult life had been spent flying planes for Indian Airlines. He had evinced no interest in Party affairs, financial or other, until the accidental death of Sanjay. Then Mrs. Gandhi started grooming Rajiv to succeed her. He had barely got his political feet wet when the assassination of his mother catapulted him into the office of the Prime Minister. Party leaders chose him in the first instance not because he was one of them but because he was a scion of the Nehru-Gandhi family and therefore the best hope of their continuing in power. Once he had consolidated his power, he barred all payment of commissions to agents of foreign arms suppliers and let it be known that since socialist nostrums had proved ineffective he intended to liberalize the socialist system of government licenses and controls, eliminating the need for any greasing of official palms. As if to back his words with action, he appointed V. P. Singh his Finance Minister, making him the most powerful person next to the Prime Minister himself.

V. P. Singh was imbued with Mahatma Gandhi's concern for the poor, and was zealous in the pursuit of his principles. Moreover, although he had been chief minister of the state of Uttar

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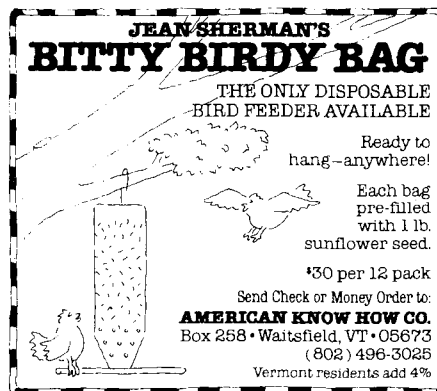
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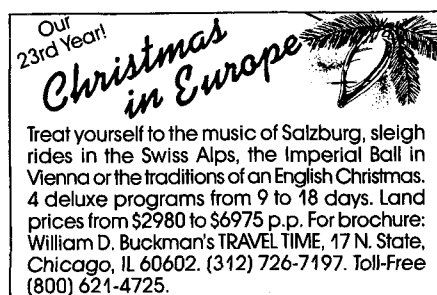
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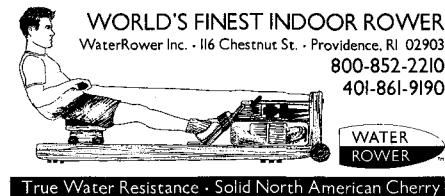
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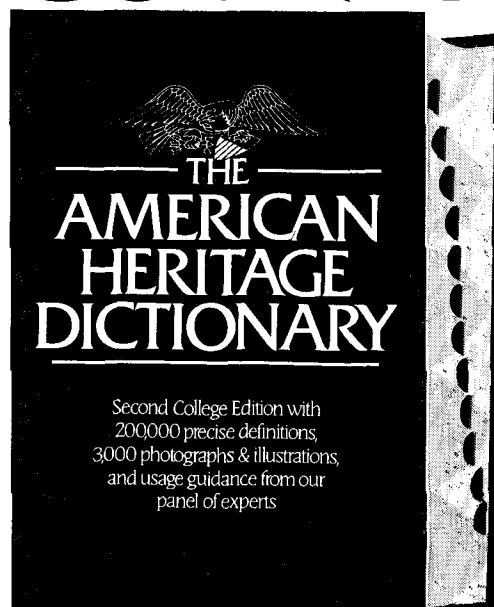
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Pradesh and Minister of Commerce in the central government, he was not a powerful figure in Congress Party politics, and that meant he had no political debts to pay, no claims of a personal or national constituency to satisfy. He set about the task of liberalizing the economy and reforming the budget, seemingly without a thought for the consequences. He all but declared war on the business community, ordering police raids on the Delhi residences of some of the most illustrious names in Indian industry, seeking to uncover evidence of tax evasion, of illegal foreign bank accounts, of the importing of goods without proper licenses—of black money. In the past, such police raids, which were attended by shaming publicity, had been conducted against notorious black marketeers and big-time film stars but not against top industrialists, who were often major behind-the-scenes contributors to political parties. In fact, the only precedent for Singh's raids was the dreaded police raids that Sanjay had masterminded during the Emergency (the period between 1975 and 1977 when Mrs. Gandhi suspended civil liberties)—raids whose object had been to bully businessmen into contributing money to the Congress Party instead of to opposition parties. Singh seemed to want to make an example of his victims and to reform the business community. He was soon being spoken of as a Savonarola, who would burn down Florence rather than allow sin to prosper. The terrorized industrialists appealed to Rajiv, who, as the president of the Congress Party, was indirectly responsible for raising money for it. But his victory had decimated the opposition parties, and he seemed to bask in the glory that the raids reflected on him.

The Party's need for money couldn't be put off indefinitely, however, and Rajiv started accepting contributions. A charitable view is that Rajiv himself didn't take kickbacks but relied for Party funds on people who were new and untrained, unworldly about the collection of money and kickbacks. If so, those people bungled. As a consequence, the Party may have succeeded in collecting more money, but Rajiv couldn't distance himself from the collection process, as his mother had—she always relied on professionals, three or four steps removed from her. One hears that under Rajiv, therefore,

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fewer people along the way could take kickbacks, and, for all anyone knows, that situation may have stirred up a certain resentment against him and made him vulnerable to charges of personal corruption. Some people now say that he never even tried to clean up corruption, that the whole purpose of his much heralded modern management style was to prevent leaks about kickbacks, and, anyway, that it was suited only to running an airline company, never to running a vast country. Be that as it may, he can no longer count on his original constituency, which gave him his big victory, and so, ironically, he has been thrown back on the very Congress machinery of bosses and intimidation from which he had seemingly tried to dissociate himself, but with this difference: in dealing with the Party machinery, he is in a much weaker position than his mother ever was. But the entire process of collecting money is murky, and most of what is known about it is hearsay. What is incontrovertible is that there seems to be no way of diminishing the role of black money in politics short of state funding of elections. But that issue has scarcely been raised here.

THE convergence of the overlapping scandals and the emergence of V. P. Singh as a possible alternative to Rajiv as a national leader gave Zail Singh an opportunity to make a bid for a second term as President. (Presidents are elected every five years by members of Parliament and of state legislatures.) His first term was to run out in July of 1987, and there had previously been no chance that Rajiv and the Party would support him for a second. But he now started badgering Rajiv. Late in April, he wrote to Rajiv demanding detailed technical information about the purchases of the West German submarines and the Bofors field guns. Rajiv lamely replied that he had laid before Parliament all the information he had. At the same time, Rajiv's advisers tried to put it about that Zail Singh couldn't be trusted as President, because he had been chief minister of Punjab and then Home Minister in the central government (the ministry concerned with internal security) during the time when the Sikh secessionist movement took root. Some of them even tried to link him with Indira Gandhi's assassination. He sought legal opinion on the extent of the President's constitutional

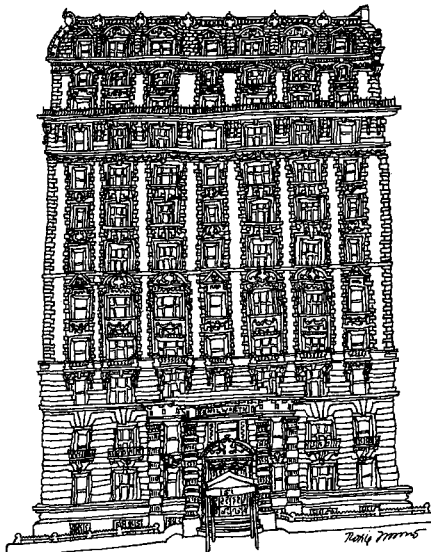
powers, and started openly telling people that he had the right to dismiss a Prime Minister who was found to be corrupt, even if the Prime Minister enjoyed the confidence of Parliament. He met with lawyers, leaders of opposition parties, Congress dissidents in Parliament, and important journalists to see what support he could muster for dismissing Rajiv and having him prosecuted on charges of corruption—apparently in return for their help in his own candidacy for a second term. It was rumored that a retired chief justice of the Supreme Court and former law minister had actually written a speech for him, which he was supposed to deliver after ousting Rajiv. Zail Singh's plan, it is said, was to call on V. P. Singh to form a new Cabinet, and give him six weeks or two months to do so and get a vote of confidence in Parliament—enough time for members of Parliament to forsake Rajiv for the new Prime Minister.

Early in May, however, the main opposition parties announced that under the constitution the President could not dismiss the Prime Minister, thereby staying Zail Singh's hand and averting a constitutional crisis. The opposition parties had various motives for their action, one of which evidently was that they did not want to be beholden to Zail Singh. And they may have fancied that Rajiv might be dethroned by the mounting scandals without any push from him. Anyway, they were all aware that if the President could dismiss a Congress Prime Minister today he could dismiss, for instance, a Janata Prime Minister tomorrow. Indeed, they had to be aware that if the President, the head of state,

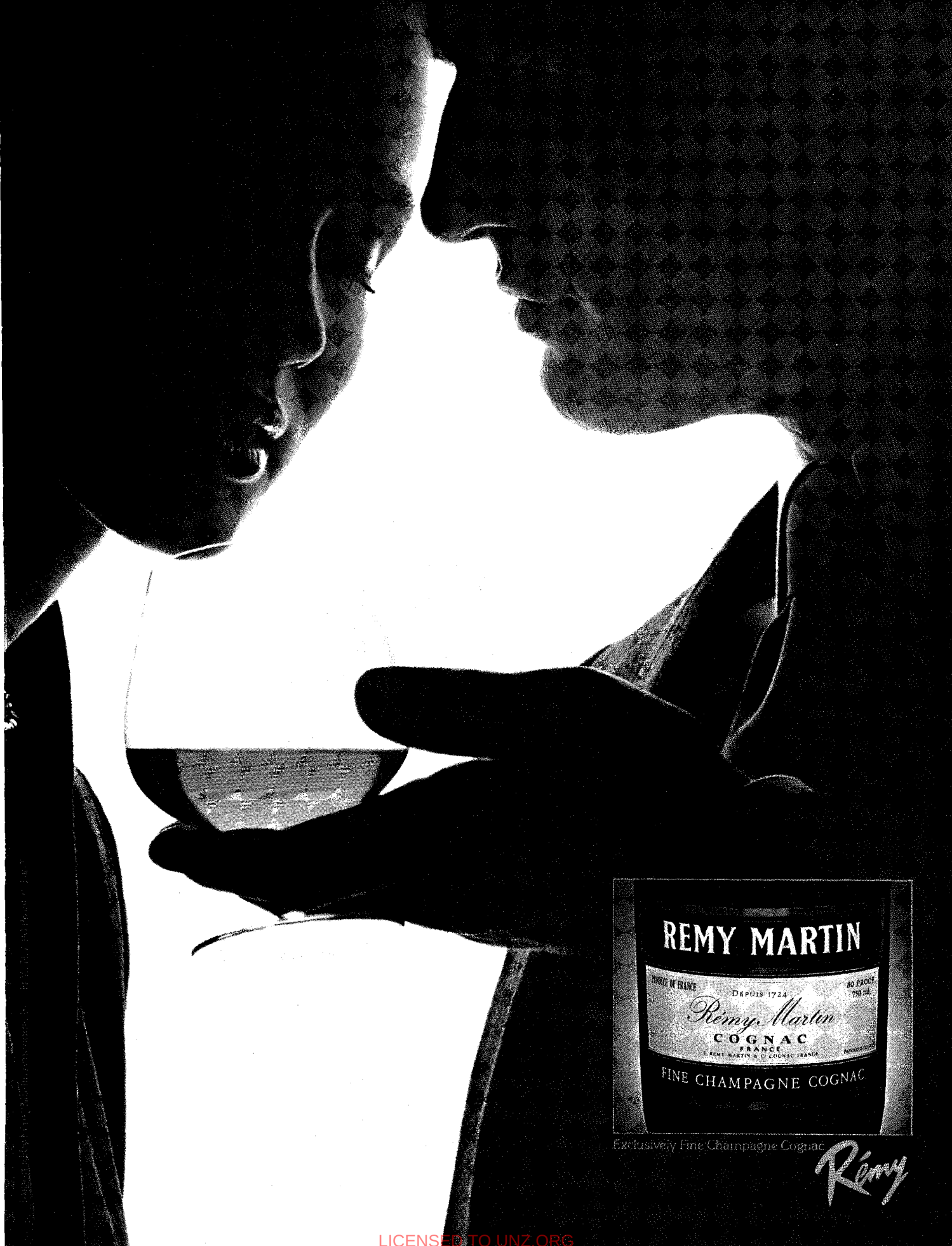
could overthrow the Prime Minister, the head of government, then one day an Army general could overthrow the head of state, and seize power. Such coups had been the fate of most poor countries, including Bangladesh and Pakistan, on India's very borders. Even so, the political atmosphere was so dangerous for Rajiv that, it is said, he passed up his first choice for the new Congress Party candidate for President, B. Shankaranand, who was known as "Rajiv's rubber stamp," and gave the nod to the more independent-minded and acceptable Ramaswamy Venkataraman, who was duly chosen by the Congress Party as its candidate.

Zail Singh now started testing the waters to see whether the opposition parties and Congress dissidents would adopt him as their candidate. V. P. Singh, who might have led a rebellion against Rajiv, wouldn't play Zail Singh's game. He was known for being an upstanding man, and he shrank from the unseemly public spectacle of the President, a member of the government, conspiring against the Prime Minister. Anyway, it seemed that he didn't want to take part in a backstabbing scheme, and one that, furthermore, was promoted by a Congress apostate. He was also riding so high politically that he had reason to expect to come into the office of the Prime Minister in his own right in due course. Then, in late June, Zail Singh's ambitions were snuffed out, when the opposition parties adopted their own candidate, Krishna Iyer, to run against Venkataraman, and Iyer let it be known that he did not think the President had the right to dismiss the Prime Minister.

Zail Singh's failure did not bring any reprieve for Rajiv. The state elections in Haryana were scheduled for June 20th and 22nd, and Rajiv had already led Congress to defeat in no fewer than nine states, one after another. Even without these losses, Haryana would have had a special importance for him. The state, which was ruled by the Congress Party, adjoined Delhi, and so was in his back yard. It was an important state in the Hindi-speaking heartland, the traditional constituency of Congress. It had been warring with the politically sensitive Punjab, on its border, over the allocation of territory, river waters, and Chandigarh, the capital they shared. For some time now, Rajiv had



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seemed to side with Haryana, where Hindus had a majority, over Punjab, where Sikhs had a majority, and as a result moderate Sikhs, who were originally his allies, felt betrayed. Indeed, he had ended up giving impetus to the Sikh secessionist movement. He certainly campaigned vigorously in Haryana. Devi Lal, the leader of a party named Lok Dal, opposed Rajiv in the state, campaigning mainly on the issue of corruption in the central government; one of the Lok Dal slogans was "We don't want foreign wives, foreign money, or foreign banks." (Rajiv's wife, Sonia, is Italian.) The Lok Dal put it about that the Bofors guns purchased by Rajiv's government were defective. The rumor was especially harmful—many of the Haryana voters were Jats, and many Jats are in the military. When the election was held, Congress was barely able to salvage half a dozen seats out of eighty, in what commentators called a "political hurricane." The Congress chief minister, Bansi Lal, and all but one of his Congress ministers were unable to hold on to their seats. One devastating effect of the rout was that, without a Congress government in Haryana, Rajiv had lost whatever leverage he had had in forcing a settlement on the two states, with the result that Punjab threatened to become either a permanent battleground of religious warfare, as Northern Ireland is in the United Kingdom, or a separate country, carved out of India the way Bangladesh had been carved out of Pakistan.

In Delhi, Congress dissidents in Parliament grew more numerous and more restive than ever. They were kept from going over to the opposition only by a recent anti-defection law, which required a member to stand for reelection whenever he or she switched parties. The Presidential election was held three weeks after the defeat of Haryana. Venkataraman was easily elected, but Rajiv immediately expelled three Congress dissidents, Arun Nehru, V. C. Shukla, and Arif Mohammed Khan, from the Party, for trying to recruit others to their ranks during the campaign. Arun Singh, a fourth dissident, at once resigned his post in protest. The four dissidents were among the most prominent members of Rajiv's or his mother's government. Arun Nehru, the Minister for Internal Security (and Rajiv's cousin), and Arun

Singh, the Minister of State for Defense, were perhaps two of the closest friends and advisers Rajiv had ever had. The following day, V. P. Singh sent this telegram to Rajiv:

The message is loud and clear, that any Congressman can be politically hanged without a hearing, or any specific reason. . . . If throwing me out of the party will help the party, I am ready to offer this supreme political sacrifice by submitting my resignation.

Ever since the German-submarine scandal, Rajiv had been under pressure from Congress officials to expel V. P. Singh from the Party. He had desisted not only because Singh was perhaps the most popular member of his besieged government but also because he didn't want to deepen the suspicions of an ever-thickening coverup. In any case, after receiving Singh's telegram Rajiv dillydallied for several days and then accepted his resignation. At the same time, as if to counter the impression that he had no intention of putting his house in order, he forced the film actor Amitabh Bachchan to resign.

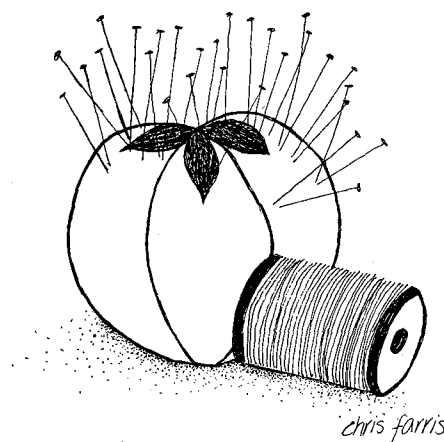
Even before the eruption of the scandals, Rajiv had frittered away the capital of his victory by backing off from bold political initiatives as soon as they met with a little resistance, by treating his Party colleagues with disrespect, by ignoring governmental institutions and institutional procedures, and, as people like to say here, by "shuffling his Cabinet like a pack of cards." (In the four years he has been in power, he has changed the composition of his Cabinet no fewer than twenty-four times.) He had got a reputation for being secretive, for not answering letters, for avoiding journalists—for keeping very much to himself and his family. Unlike previous Prime Ministers, he had no confidants in either the political or the civil establishment. Instead, he relied

on only three or four school chums, who, as the *Times of India* noted, amused him and ran errands for him and, in the process, became rich. He had lost his credibility and, with it, his ability to govern, because unless the masses respect—indeed, stand in awe of—what is called here the "stick" no one can wield it effectively and control this large, turbulent country.

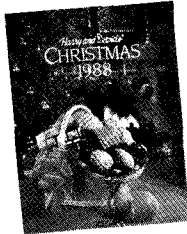
Around the end of February this year, Zail Singh, now a private citizen, casually let drop to a Delhi journalist the fact that some people had offered him three or four hundred million rupees, or thirty or forty million dollars, to wage his campaign for a second term. The remark set off a new political storm. Congress dissidents and opposition politicians started accusing each other of trying to bribe the President—a charge that was rather like the pot calling the kettle black. In any case, the possibility that the whole political process, not just Rajiv's government, might be corrupt was suddenly brought into the open, and Rajiv was quick to seize the opportunity to praise Zail Singh for making the offer public and calling it to the government's notice. It was as though he could finally portray himself in the role of judge rather than that of defendant. The editors of *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, a leading English-language magazine, interviewed Zail Singh about the bribe. They wanted to know who had offered it to him. "Wait for the right moment," he said. "I don't want any more trouble now. . . . I'll reveal the truth one day and you'll be all surprised."

WHEN V. P. Singh was forced out of the Cabinet, in April, 1987, he was very careful not to distance himself in any way from the Congress Party. Indeed, he was at pains to present himself as someone who had been ousted because he chose to be loyal to time-honored Congress principles and policies instead of to an individual. When, a few months later, he was forced to leave the Party, he was seen as a victim of Rajiv's self-serving action more than as someone who had betrayed Party principles. He was generally considered a casualty of his own campaign to sweep away the muck of scandals and thus the rightful heir to Rajiv's title as both Mr. Clean and Prime Minister.

This June, V. P. Singh stood as a united-opposition candidate in a by-



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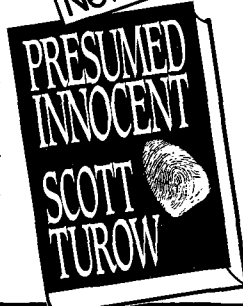
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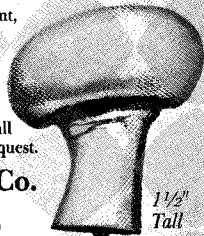
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election for Amitabh Bachchan's seat, in Allahabad. Although the significance of the election was somewhat diminished by the fact that at the last minute Bachchan failed to stand against Singh, and so deprived him of the benefit of a head-to-head contest on the issue of corruption, that was the focus of the campaign and was subsequently the source of the big victory he chalked up: he defeated his nearest rival, Sunil Shastri—the son of a former Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri—who was running as the Congress Party candidate, by more than two to one. (During the victory celebration, Singh's supporters shouted, "Bring back the nation's money to the country! Rajiv Gandhi, return to your senses.") Singh's victory was one of a series of opposition victories in by-elections, which have been seen, at least by the opposition parties, as an omen of what awaits Rajiv in the general election, which he is required under the constitution to call before December, 1989, when the sitting Parliament's mandate runs out.

But V. P. Singh, in contrast to Rajiv, is an unknown quantity when it comes to getting votes in a national election. His platform consists of little more than nationalist, populist, and anti-business speeches. His strongest suit is his modest, self-effacing character (after his victory in Allahabad, he said it would be a "disaster" for the country if he became Prime Minister), but in the cutthroat world of politics here that can be as much a disadvantage as an advantage. Moreover, the opposition parties, his only probable supporters, are, as always, somewhat divided. Anyway, opposition parties have been able to win a majority in Parliament against Congress only once, in 1977, when they united and ran against Mrs. Gandhi's generally hated Emergency, and elected a Janata government. But they weren't able to stay united and remain in power long. Even if Singh could somehow unite the opposition parties behind him, he would face the problem of getting more experienced opposition politicians, like Chandra Shekhar and Ramakrishna Hegde, to subordinate their ambitions to his.

THE issue of corruption, which has been the preoccupation of politics here for nearly two years, continues to reverberate as the dominant

theme of Rajiv's Prime Ministership. (On September 6th, journalists all across the country went on a one-day strike to protest a government measure that had just been rushed through the lower house of Parliament, and whose intent seemed to be to silence future reports of corruption or of the misuse of power by government officials.) The issue, however, is a distraction from the country's grave problems: birth control, terrorism in Punjab and Assam, the revolt of local landowners in various parts of the country, Hindu-Muslim riots, the violence of the martial Gurkhas in West Bengal, the involvement of Indian troops in the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka, the possible nuclear threat from Pakistan—not to mention the neglect of the elementary needs of the people. It is also a distraction from immediate concerns like the effects of the sudden death of President Zia-ul-Haq of Pakistan, in August; succoring the victims of the recent earthquake in Bihar; and the floods this September in Bangladesh, which have inundated a third of the country and threaten to start a new exodus of refugees from Bangladesh to India. It is a distraction, too, from Rajiv's one indisputable achievement, which may have assured him a place in history: the loosening of governmental economic controls, which has released a potent, almost explosive energy, and perhaps set the stage for a new era of private industry and a new generation of entrepreneurs. Meanwhile, many thoughtful people firmly maintain that the Congress Party is no more corrupt than any party in power would be, and that, whatever the political and moral stature of V. P. Singh, the Party and the family that have ruled the country for most of its independent life remain the best hope for the survival of Indian democracy.

—VED MEHTA

LIFE IN CALIFORNIA

[From the Claremont (Calif.) Courier]

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BOOKS

Shyness and Horror

SO profuse a spirit was Conrad Aiken, and in so many forms (lyric poetry, narrative poetry, short stories, novels, essays, book reviews, travel pieces, letters, plays), that even his keenest admirers must at times wish there were a good deal less of him to admire. He published some fifty books in all. As a result, none of his readers (with the possible exception, somewhere, of a desperate, dissertation-driven graduate student) see Aiken whole; views are necessarily partial, and one speaks tentatively. But it seems safe to say that nothing Aiken ever wrote is more striking than a letter he sent to a cousin in 1901, when he was a boy of eleven:

DEAR HAROLD:

I am glad to hear that you are better and hope you will soon be well. We are all well here, and Uncle Alfred and Uncle Will have arrived, and Uncle Alfred and I have great fun looking at my postage stamp album.

I have finished everything in my exams, and led my class in everything. Yesterday I had to climb up a telegraph pole to get the cat which was on the roof. Robert and Kempton held out a sheet and I dropped her in it, but Robert let go when he saw the cat coming as he thought it would land on his head, and the poor thing landed on the ground, but on his feet. Lately they have been digging up some of the old vaults in the old cemetery for the body of General Greene, but without success.

Yours truly,
CONRAD POTTER AIKEN

"The old cemetery" was Colonial Park in Savannah, Georgia, which lay across the street from the Aiken family home, and "General Greene" was Nathanael Greene, the Revolutionary War hero. The letter was composed on March 3rd, four days after Dr. William Ford Aiken, Conrad's father, who had been showing signs of depression and irrationality for months, shook the house at dawn by firing two bullets. With the first, Dr. Aiken murdered his wife,

Anna Potter Aiken, and with the second he killed himself. It was the oldest of the four Aiken children, Conrad, who discovered the corpses, an incident he re-created sixty-six years later, in an interview:

I got out of bed and walked through the children's bedroom... and opened the folding doors to my parents' room. I had to step over my father's body to go to my mother. But she was dead, her mouth wide open in the act of screaming. I came out, closed the folding doors, told the children to stay in their beds... I dressed myself, went downstairs and told the cook there had been an accident and to give the children breakfast downstairs, and to keep them in the dining room. Then I walked to the police station a block away and told them my father had shot my mother and himself.

What makes the boy's letter to his cousin so telling is not merely the heartbreaking stoicism of its "We are all well" but also its instinctual hope, born in tumult and agony, that suffering might be alleviated through the obliquities of the written word.

In various guises, both the stoicism and the belief in the curative powers of literature persisted throughout Aiken's life. One recognizes the scrappy eleven-year-old in a letter to a friend which Aiken, then twenty-five, wrote after his first wife, Jessie, gave birth to a stillborn child:

DEAR OLD BIRD—

The baby arrived last Monday morning at 8, but died at (or during) birth, owing to the fact that the cord came down in advance of the head, cutting off the circulation.

Jessie has taken it extremely well. She got off, otherwise, more easily than last time, if anything, and is mending very quickly.

When do you come up? I shall be here (I think) till the 20th.

CONRADIN

It was an excellent *boy*. Looked very like his father.

And in letter after letter, book after book, one recognizes also an ongoing conviction that the only meaningful place to look for solutions to life's weightiest problems is in the written



"When you quote a Presidential candidate, Gorman, you do not—I repeat—do not roll your eyes."

word. Some of Aiken's unwavering faith in literature stemmed, no doubt, from the era of his apprenticeship. He came into his own as a poet in the second decade of this century, and so was roughly contemporaneous with Robert Frost, Wallace Stevens, E. E. Cummings, Ezra Pound, and Aiken's close friend and Harvard near-classmate T. S. Eliot; it was an inspiring age. But decades later, when Aiken had begun to doubt many of the contemporaries he once esteemed, and even the potentialities of modernism itself, he continued to speak for poetry in ways that made Shelley's boast that poets are the world's "unacknowledged legislators" look modest. Expatiating on "the poet's function" in a letter to his friend John Gould Fletcher, Aiken said, "I see him as the advancing consciousness and conscience and genius of mankind, the forerunner, firebringer, orderer and releaser; the one who by finding the word for life makes life possible and coherent, and puts it within the reach of all. . . . the poet was and is the one who invents language. Which is tantamount to inventing experience, or awareness." This letter was written some years after W. H. Auden, in his elegy for Yeats, baldly announced what seems the prevailing view today: "Poetry makes nothing happen." Aiken's belief in the catalytic power of verse—his conviction that it could reshape American society—was one that, I suspect, most contemporary poets would regard with mixed bemusement and envy.

Not surprisingly, Aiken's adult life was restless, furtive, and turbulent. He was frequently described as shy; he suffered from nightmares. (When seeking to explain why, after the tragedy, he refused to kiss his parents in their caskets, he ascribed his reluctance to "shyness and horror.") He was married three times and had numerous affairs. He was often drunk and sometimes suicidal. He was also, evidently, a marvellous conversationalist. Women found him attractive, although by his early forties he had become, in his own words, "a middleaged potbellied feeble shortwinded unsocial smallpeckered sentimentalist whose orgasms are a mere fly-twinkle." Other writers found him congenial, and over the years he established close friendships with—in addition to Eliot—Malcolm Cowley,

Edmund Wilson, and Malcolm Lowry. The busy comings and goings of the first half of Aiken's life are elaborately chronicled in Edward Butscher's "Conrad Aiken: Poet of White Horse Vale" (University of Georgia; \$34.95), the initial volume of a proposed two-part biography.

Butscher's account concludes a few years before Aiken published his second novel, "Great Circle"—an essentially autobiographical tale about a literary young man, Andrew Cather, who learns that his wife and his best friend are having an affair. Cather is temporarily undone—he raves and schemes and drinks himself stupid—but later begins a psychic recuperation by making a "great circle" that returns him to the seashore where, in his childhood, his mother and his uncle drowned. In Aiken's life as well as in his art one did not turn one's back on trauma; one chose, instead, to live beside it. Aiken in time went to live beside trauma literally: near the end of his life, he moved back to Savannah—moved, in fact, next door to the house where he had seen his dead mother's silent scream. He made a great circle of his own.

If his books seem unduly preoccupied with his own problems and evasions, Aiken did have plausible grounds for thinking his concern with self artistically justified. He was one of the first American writers to immerse himself in Freud, and while still in his twenties he pored over Carl Jung, Sándor Ferenczi, Alfred Adler, Ernest Jones, and Havelock Ellis. He saw himself as a pioneer: with the new tools of psychiatry he would excavate his inexhaustible "gold mines of consciousness." Although he occasionally wondered whether "in choosing this literary method, this deliberate indulgence in the prolix and fragmentary, I merely show myself at the mercy of a personal weakness which is not universal," he proceeded on the supposition that whatever he might unearth about himself would have general import. But in Aiken's case, anyway, the self does not appear to have been enough. The longer a reader inhabits Aiken's world—whether his poetry, his fiction, or his essays—the more claustrophobic it feels; one puts him down with too much relief. This is especially true of "Ushant," a novel so transparently and exhaustively autobiographical that

Aiken, as though to forestall being criticized for a lack of invention, termed it an essay. The book is, to an ultimately cloying extent, an insider's roman à clef, and one that, thirty-six years after its publication, seems designed almost exclusively for the critic who relishes coming to his task equipped with a sort of literary conversion table (the Tsetse=T. S. Eliot, Hambo=Malcolm Lowry, and so forth). That great circle which Aiken saw as the master symbol of his art evokes many things—the sun, the moon, Shakespeare's seven ages of man (concluding in "second childishness, and mere oblivion"), the wheel of industry, and perhaps Archimedes' last words before the Roman soldier killed him ("Disturb not my circle"). But as a geometric shape it is, significantly, closed.

BUTSCHER's first volume is praiseworthy in many ways. He has patently undertaken huge amounts of research and often provides vivid local color. He treats Aiken's various irregularities and cruelties with a commendable disinterest. (Aiken's brother Robert once described Conrad as "impulsively as mean as they come.") He speaks lucidly about the evolution of Aiken's work. Such virtues duly recorded, one must add, however, that "Conrad Aiken: Poet of White Horse Vale" makes slow going. Butscher is verbose, and here and there he embogs the reader in long stretches of repetition. (Naturally, the effect is mostly soporific, but in his handling of Aiken's sexuality Butscher offers such frequent and fanciful constructions—"a naif in the sexual sphere," "the sublimated fat of thwarted sexual energy," "muscle desire," "overactive sex gland," "feverish sexual itch," "immature sexual stance," "a Don Juan drive to seduce and master women without surcease"—that the effect is enlivening, if unwittingly, comic.) He has a way of grandly proffering, with the measured slowness of an author confident of his insights, information that everybody already knows. When he notes that Harvard at the turn of the century was a "bastion of white, Anglo-Saxon manhood," he seems to be addressing a foreigner to our country; when he points out that puberty brings on a "host of hormonal and physiological changes," he might be speaking to an extraterrestrial. And



if every author adopts his own family of pet words, Butscher seems particularly unfortunate in some of his attachments; any reader who reaches the end of this volume will, almost assuredly, have grown weary of "praxis" and "reify." (The two words seem to play a game of tag throughout the text, until, with apparent inevitability, they tumble together near its close in one breathless phrase: "his determined pursuit of a convoluted, archetypal praxis capable of reifying a reflexive stream of consciousness in creative flight.")

Whatever its general virtues and local faults, Butscher's book raises questions that outstrip the life and reputation of Conrad Aiken. A reader simply cannot traverse its four hundred and fifty-nine pages without stopping to wonder whether a secondary literary figure like Aiken is profitably served by a biography that, in its eventual two volumes, bids fair to run a thousand pages. Obviously, these days there are many forces at work—most of them originating in academia, where all but a minor portion of our literary criticism is produced—that encourage the "full-length study." In a world of volatile literary reputations and highly competitive curricula vitae, the full-length study promises to legitimize both its subject and its author. But one can't help asking: Doesn't Butscher in the end dissuade Aiken much as Aiken disserved himself? Aiken may not have written too much (the mere business of unloading words upon a page seems to have been therapeutic for him), but he certainly published too much of what he wrote. Even when retrospectively seeking to pare his work, he was far too lenient; at two hundred and seventy pages, his "Selected Poems" is at least twice, and perhaps three times, as long as it should be.

Aiken's poetic gift was essentially concentrated and lyrical. He was frequently wonderful within a single line; he often composed comely stanzas; now and then he managed an admirable whole short poem; but, with rare exceptions, he could not pull off anything monumental. In his self-absorption, in his attempt to mirror elusive spiritual processes in verse, and in the speed with which his symbolical turn of mind converted a tree into a Tree, a house into a House, he elicits comparison with his near-contemporary Theodore Roethke—but he lacked the clean, burly music by which Roethke could

propel a reader through a dense or mysterious passage. Aiken's looser, softer line simply could not uphold a poem of any length; like its creator, it was "potbellied feeble shortwinded." In his impulse to war against his natural gifts, he was often his own worst enemy; Aiken in life needed an editor (as now, in death, he needs a biographer) who could save him from himself.

WHICH are the best Aiken poems, the ones that belong in a selected "Selected"? There seems surprisingly little agreement on this question. It is as though we were still waiting for the dust to clear. Yet shouldn't it have begun to clear by now? What are probably his two best-known poems—the "Morning Song," from "Senlin: A Biography," and "Bread and Music," from "Discordants"—were written nearly three-quarters of a century ago; they stand closer in time to Wordsworth's final lyrics than to this season's volumes of verse. One begins to suspect that for Aiken—as with so much else in our overactive century—the dust, instead of clearing, may only get denser.

In addition to "Morning Song" and "Bread and Music" I would make a case for "The Wedding," "Sea Holly," "The Crystal," "A Letter from Li Po," some of the "Preludes for Memnon," and portions of "Time in the Rock." In any event, "Morning Song" is a clear masterpiece, and it would be a shameful loss if the uncertainties that surround Aiken's reputation were to obscure its timeless merits. It is one of the few poems I can think of that might appropriately be called ravishingly beautiful—since that phrase, with all its risks of bathos and

cliché, conveys something of the poem's own hazardous, happy extravagance.

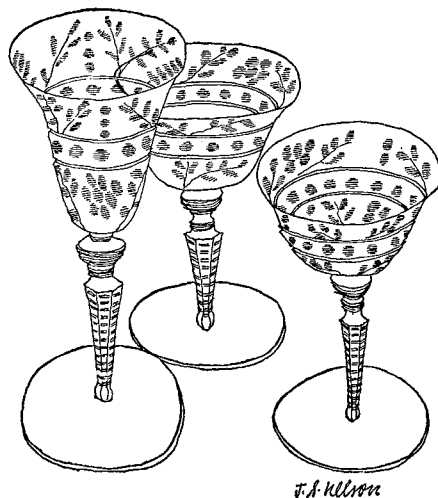
Aiken loved sumptuousity, and his primary aesthetic quest might be seen as an attempt to locate a subject and a method that would justify laying it on thick. In this penchant and drive Aiken was allied to poets of the last century like Keats (whose poetry he called "the most completely and consciously sensuous ever written"), Tennyson, and Swinburne, and to poets in our own like Cummings, Amy Clampitt, and James Merrill. In "Morning Song"—and perhaps only there—Aiken found a receptacle so rich that nothing, however bejewelled, could look *too* gorgeous or voluptuous within it, not even stanzas like this:

It is morning. I stand by the mirror
And tie my tie once more.
While waves far off in a pale rose
twilight
Crash on a white sand shore.
I stand by a mirror and comb my hair:
How small and white my face!—
The green earth tilts through a
sphere of air
And bathes in a flame of space.

And this:

There are horses neighing on far-off
hills
Tossing their long white manes,
And mountains flash in the rose-
white dusk,
Their shoulders black with rains.
It is morning. I stand by the mirror
And surprise my soul once more;
The blue air rushes above my ceil-
ing,
There are suns beneath my floor.

"Morning Song" is the tenth part of a twenty-one-part poem. As a whole, "Senlin: A Biography" is a curious and only fitfully satisfying account of a pipe-smoking fellow with an unlikely name who is forever gazing into or out of mirrors. The name suggests Merlin, and this man who hears "the throb of the bridal star" has something of the fey Arthurian wizard about him, but the magical transformations the poem contemplates are of the everyday sort wrought by time; Aiken later revealed that Senlin is "the 'little old man' that each of us must become." The poem has links to visionary work like Tennyson's "Song of the Lotos-Eaters" or Coleridge's "Kubla Khan." But if those two poems can "excuse" their opulence by recourse to drugs (Tennyson presents the literal drug of the lotos; Coleridge offers a poem composed entirely of druggery, dissolving vistas, and the claim—later disputed by





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scholars—that he wrote the thing at one go, during an opium high) the power of “Morning Song,” by contrast, derives at bottom from its chilly rationality. However odd or nebulous the man Senlin may be, he is superficially of this world: he ties his necktie, he heads off to work. All the poem’s lovelinesses are finally set against the cold deserts of our modern, charted firmament—that universe whose average temperature, so the astrophysicists tell us, is only a couple of degrees above absolute zero. The poem’s luxurious trappings, its romantic pastels and auroral magic, are all revealed as defenses—probably inadequate—against a frighteningly vast and indifferent cosmos.

“Senlin: A Biography” was one of a series of “symphonic” poems which Aiken worked on in his twenties and thirties. Their goal was an “absolute music,” which was “not so much intended to convey any single dominant idea or theme as to be, in itself, a small sort of world in which, inevitably, ideas are implicit”—his self-explanations were often woolly. Like William Carlos Williams on the “variable foot” or Charles Olson on “projectivist verse,” Aiken sometimes left the stymied reader trying to settle on whether (a) the theory was originally sharp in the poet’s mind but became fuzzy in the transfer to paper or (b) the poet, too, was always a little bamboozled by the terms he coined. Aiken was better as a critic of others, and at his best (as when he said of Housman’s poetry that “what makes it sometimes worse is one’s suspicion that this adolescent note, this boyishness, is a cultivated thing, a calculated falsetto”) he could be rough and incisive. But despite his reputation as a stirring conversationalist he was a remarkably humorless critic: given his obvious intelligence, his reviews are much less fun than they ought to be. He was far more engaging in his letters, a selection of which was published by Yale University ten years ago. Sifting through them, one cannot help growing fonder of Aiken, even as they reveal his aggression and paranoia more openly than his fiction or his essays ever did; in itself, his dedication to poetry makes much forgivable. He certainly deserved the happiness he found in later life, when he threw off, at least intermittently, the ghosts of the past. After he moved to Savannah and settled next door to the house where his

childhood ended overnight, he wrote an effusive letter to his daughter Joan which makes a sunny companion piece to that dark, impacted note he sent his cousin Harold more than half a century before. This one began:

Yes, here we are, in this most heavenly house and heavenly city, looking out on the old colonial cemetery where I played every day among the brick vaults and marble pyramids and palms and palmettos . . .

Of course, Aiken could never really put that pair of deaths behind him, even if in later life he remarked, with a touching blend of bravado and wishfulness, “I think it took me . . . fifteen years” to recover. In truth, he returned again and again—in his thoughts, in his art, in his nightmares—to that room of death, and the strongest and most enduring impression that Aiken’s work is likely to leave upon the reader is a heartfelt desire to see Dr. William Aiken’s devastation miraculously mended. The reader, too, keeps returning to that morning, February 27, 1901, and to the pistol’s two reports. If only the sound could have been that of a motorcar backfiring! Everyone might then return to sleep, and the “heavenly city” be heavenly still.

—BRAD LEITHAUSER

BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

THE TWO DEATHS OF SEÑORA PUCCINI, by Stephen Dobyns (Viking; \$17.95). The place is a Latin-American country that might be Chile, and the story involves a group of former high-school classmates, now edging fifty, who meet at dinner twice a year to remember the old days. The dinner here is given by the most illustrious of the group, a surgeon of exquisite taste and refinement, and, for various reasons (including civil unrest that has turned the city into a battlefield), only three guests show up—a literary critic, a government worker, and a former hotel manager now down on his luck. The surgeon has a once beautiful housekeeper who moves like an automaton. As the evening progresses, the surgeon tells the story of his servant, and the stories of the guests are also revealed. The dinner stands in counterpoint to gunshots and the smell of burning buildings, and the surface events stand in contrast to the emerging secrets of the prin-

cial characters. Mr. Dobyns appears to be telling us that none of us are what we seem to be—that all of us live lives directed by more or less shameful obsessions—and his telling is both gripping and wildly theatrical.

VALENTINO and SAGITTARIUS, by Natalia Ginzburg, translated from the Italian by Avril Bardoni (Seaver/Holt; \$17.95). Two novellas by this superb writer, which were published in 1951 and 1957, respectively, and are available in this country for the first time. Even in these early works, Miss Ginzburg displays one of her later themes: what happens when the dogged aspirations of a family are played out on a hollow reed. In "Valentino," the instrument is a prodigal son who proves himself a fop and a weakling; in "Sagittarius," it is a ferociously careless mother's megalomania—she wants to open an art gallery, where cups of tea will be served at five o'clock—and the alliance she pursues to a disastrous end. Each of the stories is quietly narrated by a daughter of the house, who is capable of an unerring description of the progression of her family's circumstances, if not its inner logic. There is much to admire here, and for readers unfamiliar with Miss Ginzburg's books, many of which have been ably translated during the last few years, the stories might serve as a fine introduction to her œuvre.

GENERAL

THE FACTS: A NOVELIST'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY, by Philip Roth (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; \$17.95). The creator of Neil Klugman, Gabe Wallach, Alexander Portnoy, David Kepesh, Peter Tarnopol, and Nathan Zuckerman here bares the actual life behind these variously animated and anguished alter egos. The younger of two sons of a Newark insurance agent, Roth attended Weequahic High School, Newark Colleges of Rutgers, and Bucknell University; baseball, literature, and sex concerned him, each in its season. While studying for his Ph.D. at the University of Chicago, he met and married a Gentile divorcée with two small children; he is still licking the psychic wounds left by their unhappy relationship. Another wound has been inflicted by

critics, amateur and professional, who absurdly find his exuberant portrayals of Jewish-American life anti-Semitic. The autobiography would seem merely a thinner version, simultaneously dry and watered-down, of his droll, explosive, and fearless novels did not one of his characters, Nathan Zuckerman, contribute a long epistolary epilogue, which lifts "The Facts" into the lively problemativeness of fiction. "Sure," Zuckerman portrays himself telling his charming English wife, Maria, "he [Roth, his creator] talks so freely about all his soft spots, but only after choosing awfully carefully which soft spots to talk about." Not so brilliantly convolute and argumentative as the author's last novel, "The Counterlife," this new raid on Roth's private reality shows, once more, that there is no end of ways to skin a vigorous enough cat.

THE STUDIOS OF PARIS: THE CAPITAL OF ART IN THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY, by John Milner (Yale; \$39.95). A wonderfully evocative history of the quasi-official art industry in Paris during the years of its full flowering, from about 1880 to the outbreak of the First World War. The author describes in satisfying detail every aspect of the Paris art scene—from the rigorous education of the student, either at the École des Beaux Arts or in the ateliers of rich and famous artists, to the setting up of a studio and the wooing of dealers, and the soliciting of official commissions. The illustrations show us scenes of rowdy and often violent student life, the sumptuous interiors of the studios of the well-heeled, and works by and portraits of the painters and sculptors who ruled the Paris art world of the epoch.

NOTE: "A Book of Bees," by Sue Hubbell, has been published by Random House (\$17.95). Much of the contents originally appeared in *The New Yorker*.

In last week's letter on mining from Tom Ricci, the typesetter misread Mr. Ricci's handwriting. The second sentence in the last paragraph should have read "Look them right in the eye..." not "Poke them right in the eye..." in reference to town board, city council and county board representatives.—*Ladysmith (Wis.) News*.

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Boyd's-Philadelphia
Crego's
Fillings
Jack Harper
Larrimor's
John Mazzo
Peter Richard
Tiger Hall

RHODE ISLAND
Hillhouse Ltd.

SOUTH CAROLINA
Bell's Traditionals
Brittons
Jack Krawcheck
Jack Runnion

TENNESSEE
James Davis
Gentry Ltd.
M.S. McClellan
Mobley & Sons

TEXAS
J.E. Borron
Cambridge Clothier
Culwell & Son
Norton-Ditto
Todd's

UTAH
Nordstrom
VERMONT
Michael Kehoe, Ltd.

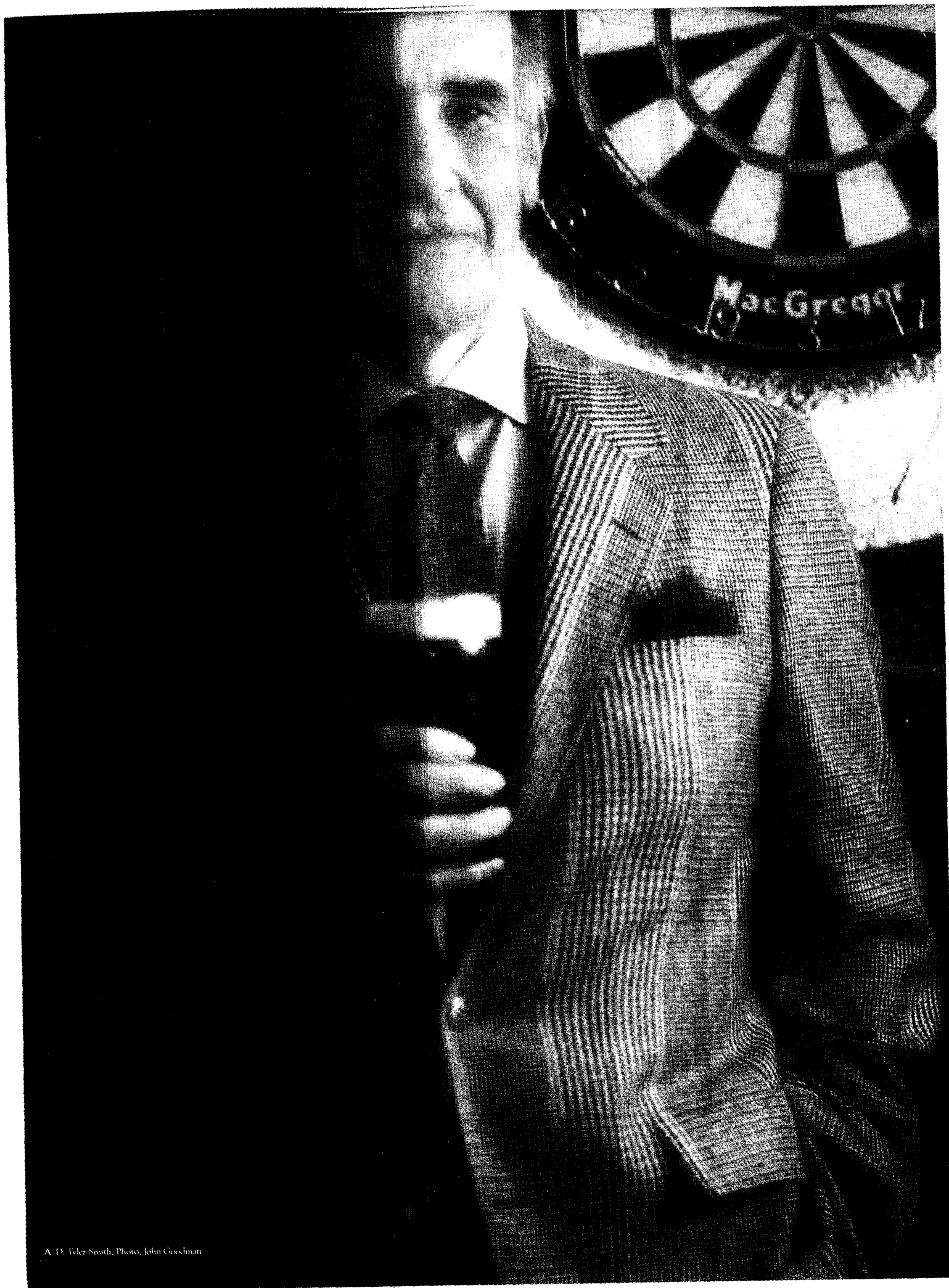
VIRGINIA
Beecroft & Bull Ltd.
Davidsons
Eljo's

WASHINGTON, D.C.
Arthur A. Adler
Nordstrom
Graham & Gunn

WASHINGTON STATE
Albert Ltd.
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